00083600

Digitized with financial assistance from



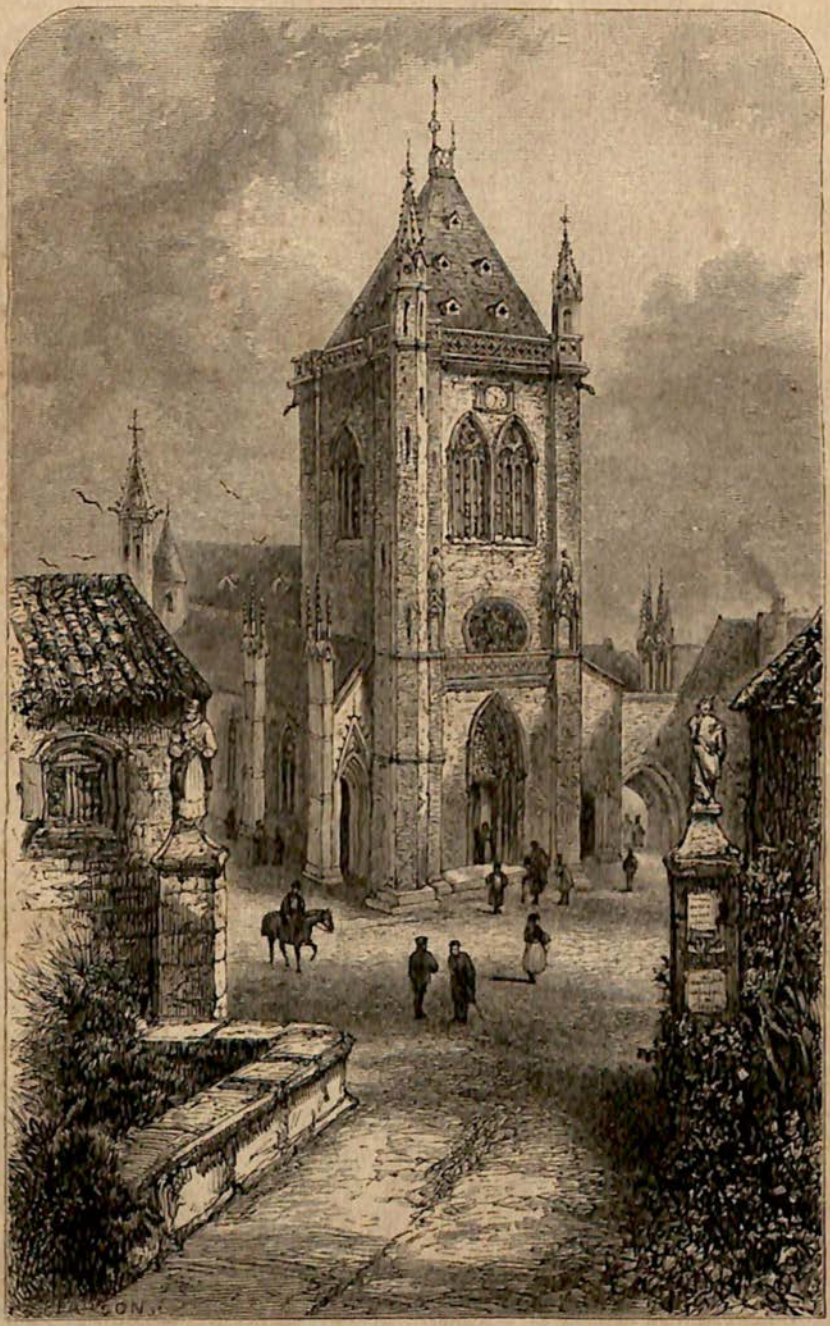
HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC

WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018

IN THE ALSATIAN MOUNTAINS



NIEDER-HASLACH CHURCH.

IN THE

ALSATIAN MOUNTAINS

A Narrative of a Tour in the Vosges

BY KATHARINE LEE

AUTHOR OF 'A WESTERN WILDFLOWER,' ETC.

£3600
ae.



WINDOW AT RAPPOLTSWEILER

3964

W - C - 52

LONDON

RICHARD BENTLEY & SON

Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen

1883

914.438
Int
83600.



Printed by R. & R. CLARK, *Edinburgh.*

TO MY LITTLE DAUGHTER

YSOLT

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

By the Stour valley, where the low lands lie,
And great gray towers break through the distant haze,
We left thee, darling, in those summer days
While we went wandering under foreign sky.
To a wide valley, where, while Rhine flows by,
A great red church its stately spire doth raise,
We journeyed, and by dales and forest ways
Sought out old castles and blue mountains high.
Over us both the same arched heaven was bent;
Both rivers run into the selfsame sea;
Those steeples point each to the selfsame Throne,
Where He, who ever watcheth o'er His own,
Was keeping guard alike o'er us and thee
In German Elsass or in English Kent.

PREFACE.

JUDGING from the result of certain inquiries made of booksellers, and of a search among the shelves devoted to topographical literature in the British Museum, it would seem that no book has as yet appeared on the subject of the Vosges Mountains. It is curious that so beautiful, so accessible, and so cheap a district should have remained so long unknown to the British tourist; and this fact in itself attracted us to the place, and will serve as an apology for writing a book about it, in the hope of inducing others to enjoy themselves as we did. That we did enjoy the tour there is no doubt, and I think I may have shown that with some clearness in the course of the book; that the tour was inexpensive is very evident, for it only cost us £25 from London to London,

and we took some three weeks over it, and our description will show that we had little, if any, "roughing it" to undergo. The *Globe* newspaper of June 14, 1883, in an article on "Travelling and Bookmaking," says:—"Of late a new form of *impressions de voyage* has come into existence, securing a maximum of book for a minimum of travelling expenses;" and no doubt the present work may be so classified, but I have not attempted to fill it up with extracts from encyclopædias, "history and politics from blue-books, sundry statistics," etc., because I do not think that such details would be of more interest to my readers than they are to myself. There are several allusions to politics in the course of the book, but they are the results of conversations with persons whom we met, and may be taken for exactly what they are worth. We were somewhat interested in trying to discover the feeling of the Alsatians towards their German masters; and having, as we may perhaps have shown, a dislike for the conceited, domineering, hard-working, serious-minded Teutons above all foreigners, we were perhaps mischievously pleased that

our Alsatian friends agreed with us. Nevertheless the statements given to us may not represent the feelings of the country at large, so that we may say of them, as of the "other books" of which Hierome spoke, that we do not "apply them to establish any doctrine." All that we could say from our own observation was that, whether the government was good or bad, it seemed to be "all there." The omnipresence of the government of Alsace forms a striking contrast to that of Switzerland. I believe they have some sort of government in Switzerland, but I do not think they use it for anything, while in Alsace it is present at every turn, and is used a good deal too.

This book does not pretend to be an exhaustive account of the Vosges. It is merely my diary during our tour put into a continuous form,—a narrative of what we did and what we saw exactly as it happened and very much as we recorded it at the time. As it was, we were able in the course of a very short time to visit most of the places of interest in the district, and to obtain a very good general idea of the chief objects of interest in the country,

which idea I hope I shall have been able to convey to my readers. I notice that I have very often remarked that we were sorry to leave such and such a place; this looks as though we found several of the places agreeable, which was indeed the case. I can therefore strongly recommend any one who wishes for a pleasant and easy tour to follow our example and try the Vosges.

I have not attempted to go upon any principle with reference to the spelling or form of Alsatian names. I have used for the most part the names that I found in most common use, or in the English translation of Baedeker's *Rhine*. These seem chiefly to be the German forms, and as most of the places are almost unknown to English readers, it really does not much matter which form one uses.

KATHARINE LEE.

HAMPSTEAD, *June* 1883.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

ENGLAND TO BRUSSELS AND JEMELLE 1

CHAPTER II.

JEMELLE TO METZ 13

CHAPTER III.

ZABERN 26

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOH-BARR 36

CHAPTER V.

WASSELNHEIM TO WANGENBURG 48

CHAPTER VI.

PAGE

OVER THE SCHNEEBERG TO NIDECK 62

CHAPTER VII.

THE NIDECK VALLEY 73

CHAPTER VIII.

NIEDER-HASLACH 90

CHAPTER IX.

A FREE CITY OF THE EMPIRE 104

CHAPTER X.

ROSHEIM TO GIRBADEN AND ST. ODILE . . . 132

CHAPTER XI.

THE ODILIENBERG 149

CHAPTER XII.

RAPPOLTSWEILER AND BEBELNHEIM 164

CHAPTER XIII.

PAGE

THE LAC BLANC 187

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FRONTIER OF FRANCE AND GERMANY . . 196

CHAPTER XV.

GÉRARDMER AND THE COL DE BRAMONT . . . 207

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HIGHEST OF THE VOSGES 226

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ROLLE AND THE LAUCHTHAL 248

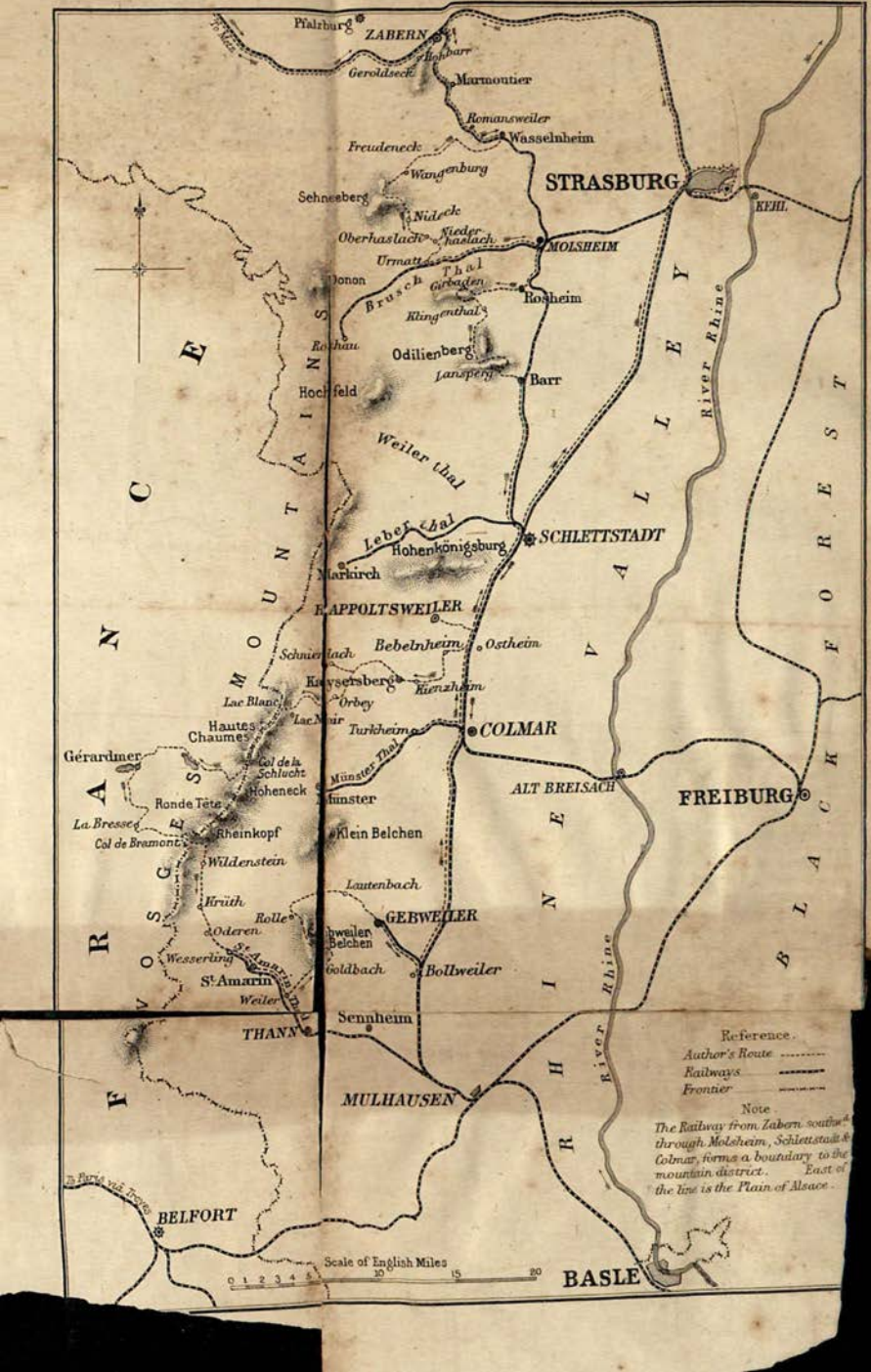
CHAPTER XVIII.

TURKHEIM 264

APPENDIX.

EXPENSES OF THE TOUR 277

ITINERARY 280


Pfalzburg
ZABERN
Harbarr
Geroldseck
Marmoutier
Romansweiler
Wasselnheim
Freudeneck
Wangenburg
STRASBURG
KEHL
Schneeberg
Nideck
Oberhaslach
Niederhaslach
MOLSHEIM
Urmatt
Thal
Donon
Girbaden
Rosheim
Bruscb
Klingenthal
Rothau
Odilienberg
Lanspern
Barr
Hochfeld
Weiler thal
Leber thal
Hohenkönigsburg
SCHLETTSTADT
Markirch
KAPPOLTSWEILER
Schnierlach
Bebelnheim
Ostheim
Kaysersberg
Kintzheim
Lac Blanc
Orbey
Lac Noir
Hautes Chaumes
Turkheim
COLMAR
Gérardmer
Col de la Schlucht
Münster Thal
Hoheneck
Münster
ALT BREISACH
FREIBURG
Ronde Tête
La Bresse
Col de Bramont
Rheinkopf
Klein Belchen
Wildenstein
Lautenbach
Krüth
Rolle
GEBWEILER
Oderen
Wesserling
St Amarin
Goldbach
Bollweiler
Weiler
Sennheim
THANN
MULHAUSEN
BELFORT
BASLE
Reference.
Author's Route
Railways
Frontier
Note
The Railway from Zabern southw.d through Molsheim, Schlettstadt & Colmar, forms a boundary to the mountain district. East of the line is the Plain of Alsace.
Scale of English Miles
0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15 20
VOSGES MOUNTAINS
FORÊT NOIRE
BLACK FOREST
VALLEY
River Rhine
RHINE
River Rhine

IN THE ALSATIAN MOUNTAINS.

CHAPTER I.

ENGLAND TO BRUSSELS AND JEMELLE.

We were tired of London, tired of England—if our finances had allowed it we should have considered ourselves tired of Europe,—and pined for fresh fields and pastures new in the rest of the world; but from England to Asia or America is a far cry and a loud one as far as money is concerned; so we were fain to turn our longing eyes towards *the* Continent (par excellence?) or rather the continental map. The principal objects on the map—the large towns—we utterly scouted; we had had enough of the largest town in Europe to last us for a very long time, and we wanted country scenery and solitude, —by solitude meaning the absence of our fellow-countrymen and women—foreigners not counting.

Where can we go, we asked, where we cannot meet the British tourist? Cook's excursion tickets were advertised for everywhere; and wheresoever the Cook is, there shall the British tourists be gathered together. The plains of Central Russia seemed about the only un-Cooked region; and as we hate plains and detest Russians, we decided not to go there.

We were going to give up any hope of quiet, and to follow meekly in the British train to Switzerland, when my husband began to whistle a tune.

"The very place for us," I said.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"The Blue Alsatian Mountains," I replied; "let us go there. I have longed to go among them ever since I first saw them from Strasburg, and nobody has ever been able to tell us anything about them, except that Erckmann and Châtrian wrote about them, and that there are wolves there."

We agreed to go. We told various friends of our project. Some had never heard of the Vosges, some thought they were in the south of France, some in Switzerland, and one in Austria. We were warned by some against robbers; by others against wolves, wild boars,

and other fierce and noisome beasts; and one kind friend offered the loan of a revolver, which my husband refused, on the ground that if it were loaded it might go off and hurt some one, and if it were not loaded it would be of no use.

Our preparations were soon made. We would go away for three weeks, and take no more than we could carry, — a knapsack crammed with changes of raiment, a bag of sketching materials, a mackintosh, an ulster, an alpenstock, and an umbrella. We divided these very equally. I took the umbrella. Armed with return tickets to Strasburg and back we sought the Calais-Douvres steamer. That estimable boats, or these estimable boat (for the dual unity of it is puzzling), "came as a boon and a blessing" to us as usual, or, rather, we came to it (or them), and received the negative boon and blessing of no sea-sickness.

The journey across need not be described: other people have been by the same route, and there are no stations or objects of interest on the way. There was the usual scramble at Calais, caused by a large body of persons all trying to squeeze through a passage two feet in width at the same time, and a frantic rush

to get something to eat, with a very small and expensive result. Calais is not beautiful, and does not smell nice; yet the train seems so loath to leave it, and hangs about it so lovingly, that one can only account for it by remembering that trains cannot smell—I mean in a grammatically active sense: passengers can. For a wonder our carriage was not overcrowded, and an Englishman therein began to talk to us as soon as we got in.

"You won't find room for your knapsack in that net. It is ridiculous how narrow them Belgian carriages are; nothing like these anywhere else, and crowded like a sheep-pen. They manage these things much better on the Paris line."

At this moment the Paris train passed us packed to the very utmost limits of its capabilities. We all saw it, of course; but the stranger, nothing baffled, continued—

"Ah yes, but most of those people get out at the next station. There is no line in all Europe so confoundedly badly managed as this one is."

Not having been over this particular line more than once before, we did not feel capable of offering remarks upon its manners and

customs, but said instead that the day had turned out remarkably fine.

"Hum—well—" he replied, glancing at the soft flecked sky, and the golden sunshine upon the cornfields, "rather cloudy. Now I have no doubt they have a perfectly clear day in England."

"Scarcely," my companion remarked, "for it was raining in Dover three hours ago."

"It is quite clear there now," he answered, authoritatively; "and do you see how ridiculously early these fellows are beginning their harvest?"

I mildly suggested that if their corn was ripe it would be a pity not to cut it, but was quenched by the remark—

"These foreigners have no business to begin their harvest before we do."

Nobody ventured to reply to this sentiment, and our journey was continued in silence for some time. The low-lying Flemish country, with its green marshes and golden cornfields, its grey willows, and long rows of poplars, was unusually lovely under the July sun and a faintly-clouded sky.

Presently we came to the Belgian frontier station, and our friend in the corner became brisk again.

"It's the most monstrous iniquity in the

world!" he exclaimed, "this system of persecuting passengers at the frontiers in this way. I call it a deliberate insult to compel me, a British subject, to get out and be subjected to a personal scrutiny by these undersized little Frenchmen"—our friend was about five feet four himself. "I don't understand why we put up with it!"

"Because we can't help it, I suppose," my husband remarked as he got out and received the polite assurances of a tall official that there was no necessity for our taking our small portion of this world's goods out of the carriage.

"Do you mean to say you are not going to be searched?" inquired our new friend, much aghast, as my husband stepped into the carriage again.

"The President of the Republic, or the Prime Minister of Belgium, or whoever he is in the cocked hat, says that if this is all our luggage it is unnecessary."

"Then, by Jingo!" exclaimed the little man, getting out of the carriage in a great hurry, "I'll go and see what this means; it's an insult to the English nation that they don't consider it worth while even to search our luggage. I'll

go and insist on their unstrapping my bag this moment. Not search me indeed!" and, bag in hand, he dived among the crowd on the platform.

"What an awful example of the Englishman abroad," said my husband, looking after him and laughing. "He doesn't understand a word of French, and it is just as well that cocked-hatted gentleman doesn't know any English, or he would do the French equivalent for knocking our little friend down. Now they have both gone into the Custom House. I hope he will be satisfied!"

Presently he came back, scarlet in the face, and indignant beyond description.

"I'll report the whole affair to the Minister of Police," he said; "that scoundrel insisted that I wanted to declare. Declare indeed! I didn't want to declare anything—I only wanted my rights as an English passenger of having my luggage searched; and the fool kept on wanting me to declare—make a speech, I'll be bound—foreigners are always talking. I'll declare them to the police if they don't search my luggage properly."

"Well, did they?" we asked.

"Did they? No, they didn't; kept on

jabbering a lot of French, and then made a chalk mark on the outside. That's no good. Why didn't they search the bag properly?"

At Brussels our discontented little friend was going to remain for the night. He tried hard to persuade us to do so too. He seemed to have taken rather a fancy to our society, possibly because my companion's wonderfully good temper soothed his own fiery little spirit by contrast. He inquired into all our plans, and listened with much interest to our enthusiastic hopes of the Vosges; then said—I am afraid rather to our disgust—that he thought he would follow our example, and go there too, adding that he would be sure to meet us at some of the places we had mentioned.

We felt as if the spoils of victory were wrested from our grasp before the war began, and could only smile meekly at the sacrifice. I have wondered since whether he did not discern our pride in our enterprise, and do us the usual friendly turn of taking us down a little. Anyhow he appeared to think he had conferred a wonderful benefit on us by the way in which he shook hands when we got out of the train.

We had friends to meet us in Brussels, who, with a tender forethought, brought us a bag of

the most enticing pastry nothings that the mind of man can conceive, or a Belgian cook's fingers execute.

We drove across the bright, pretty city, where all the servant-maids were washing the pavements with long mops, for the morrow was the Sabbath, to the Luxemburg station. Here we were plunged into the struggling side of Belgian life. Such a fight for places in a train I never witnessed except after fireworks at the Crystal Palace.

One of our friends, a wary inhabitant of Brussels, kept us out of the crowd. We saw the last carriage filled to the last seat, and hope fled from us. But our friend very soon reassured us, and hope came back again.

"There are only a few second-class passengers left," she said. "They will bring another carriage, and you may get a compartment all to yourselves."

Such is the philosophy of waiting. We had a comfortable compartment, as she said, all to ourselves, with the satisfaction of knowing that we had contributed to making the train ten minutes late in starting, and so keeping those huddled-up Belgians baking, while we were cool and comfortable.

The comfort of being able to lie down, and the pastry nothings, kept us employed until we came to Namur. There the Belgian officials were no longer able to bear the situation. Here were two people in a carriage all to themselves. Ruin would prostrate the kingdom if such reckless extravagance was allowed to continue.

Two people got out of a first-class carriage at Namur. The guards went round beating up all the second-class carriages. No one got out to oblige them. They were packed as tight as they could hold.

Then ensued a mighty consultation, in which a station-master, several guards, and a dozen men in blouses, took active parts. The guard could scarcely contain himself for excitement. The station-master was on the brink of tears. At last an admission was wrung from him. He walked away that he might not behold the sacrifice.

We were to occupy the two empty seats in a first-class carriage.

We had some difficulty in comprehending the guard's French. We rarely understand French when we are asked to do anything we don't want to do. But he made us understand at last, and we quitted our carriage, and directly

afterwards it was detached from the train, and thus ruin was averted from the Luxemburg railway.

We grumbled a little at first. We had ridden first-class before; it was not a new experience to us, and we did not appreciate the change as we ought to have done. The second-class carriages were quite as comfortable, and we had been able to lie down. Being meek people we had not insisted on our rights, as our little friend would have done, and for once in a thousand years the average compensation came to the long suffering.

Two Belgian gentlemen were in the train, who conversed while the rest listened in silence.

"Behold!" said one of them in French, a thin man dressed in a light alpaca suit, and very closely shaven. "Behold the wonderful march of progress! Look at the stupendous pace at which we travel. We are here—we are there! Truly it is marvellous!"

His companion, a large, rather greasy man, with a white waistcoat and drooping cheeks, shook his head slowly. He had evidently not made up his mind where he was.

The other gentleman became excited.

"What dolts, what unimaginative ones, were

not our ancestors!" he cried. "Behold the steam; contemplate its gigantic power as exemplified on this railway on which we find ourselves. My faith! is it not marvellous, stupendous? Do we not fly through the air at the astounding pace of five-and-twenty miles an hour? Consider this!"

"I have heard," said the fat gentleman very solemnly, "that the pace made on the Nord Railway has even reached the enormous speed of *thirty* miles an hour." He paused, looked at his astonished and delighted friend, and then ejaculated slowly: "But I do not believe it. It is not possible." After this he sank into repose, while his friend endeavoured to rumple his hair with his fingers, which was a manifest impossibility, for it would have been easier to have rumpled his fingers with his hair, so short and stiff it was.



CHAPTER II.

JEMELLE TO METZ.

We had settled to stop the night at Jemelle. This was because we had never heard of any one else having done so, and we had a morbid longing after being "the first that ever burst into silent seas."

Jemelle is not important. There is nothing to see there. It is just inside the forest of Ardennes, but the forest is not much of a forest there. Still we expected quiet at any rate.

It was dark when we arrived. The road from the station led down a steep hill, and, avoiding several omnibuses, we set out to seek a lodging. At the foot of the hill a girl accosted us, and asked if we wanted an hotel. We did, so we followed her to a little roadside inn bearing on its front the title *Hôtel de Luxembourg*. It seemed clean, so we entered. A middle-aged woman came to answer our inquiries, and we

were shown into a little room with bare floor and short bedsteads.

We asked the price of the room. The landlady seemed puzzled. She seemed new to the trade, and it was matter for consideration. Were we not strangers, and evidently English, and therefore to be made to pay? After a consultation somewhere in the kitchen premises she returned and asked if we would breakfast there.

"Certainly," we replied.

"Then," said she, "I cannot think of letting you have bed and breakfast for less than a franc each. I should be ruined if I did. I assure you it is quite the usual charge."

She defended what she evidently really regarded as extortion so ably that we had not the heart to beat down her gigantic charges. For once we forgot that we had come determined to do the tour on the cheap, and agreed to pay this enormous price.

With the recklessness of compulsory extravagance we ordered supper in a lordly manner.

"What would we have?"

"Whatever we could get. We were hungry, and had had nothing but cakes since early morning. Let them give us a good supper."

We got a good supper—exquisitely-cooked

fillets of beef, salad, potatoes, sauté, cheese, fruit, and excellent beer. But again the extortionate charges appeared, and they wanted a franc and a half each for this feast.

"Do you think we shall hear the trains?" said I, as we went up to bed, and a screech as of a peacock gone mad was wafted in at the open door.

"Oh no," said my husband; "that must be the last train. Jemelle is quite a little place, and I don't think the night expresses stop here."

"In that case I will leave the window open," said I, "for it is very close and warm."

Just as I was dropping off to sleep a fearful yell burst from an engine at the station. It lasted some seconds, and then I remarked: "The last train seems a long time getting off."

"I am sure there isn't a later one than this," said my husband. "I should not mind the whistle if there was no footboard to this bed. They don't build beds for persons of my length here. There goes the whistle again! Truly I agree with Touchstone—'Here am I in Ardennes, and the more fool I. When I was at home I was in a better place.' We will go away from here to-morrow."

Then began a noise and a pandemonium of

which Dante had no notion, for steam whistles were not known in his day. Engine answered engine in jerks and shrieks and yells. Sometimes they vied with each other in loudness of sound, sometimes in length of yell, sometimes in the number of jerks per minute.

My husband got up hastily and shut the window. He did not seem pleased at something.

"What a number of last trains they seem to have," I remarked quietly. I need not record his answer. He spoke of trains and engines and drivers, and Belgians, and even the forest of Ardennes itself, in terms which the most uneducated foreigner could understand. I do not think he was quoting Touchstone this time.

There was not much sleep for us that night. Jemelle is a large shunting station for goods trains, and this whistling seems to be a favourite pastime of engine-drivers. The inhabitants say that they get so used to it as not to mind it. I wonder how long it takes.

We left Jemelle at about half-past ten next morning. The station was crowded with peasants in holiday costume, for it was Sunday, and the third-class carriages seemed crammed.

The Ardennes country did not look specially inviting from the train. It is but moderately picturesque. It reminded one somewhat of the less striking parts of inland Cornwall, in its low woods, gray rocks, streams, and rough heathery hills. There were scarcely any inhabitants in this quiet region. Large woods occupied a great portion of the scene, but often we came to cleared districts, where only the heather and low plants remained. But we had not come to see the Ardennes, so we did not feel particularly interested, and after our sleepless night we were not inclined to look favourably upon anything.

What they do with their frontiers in this part of the world is a puzzle to me. There was a station with a Belgian custom-house, and about five minutes afterwards another custom-house told us that we were in Luxemburg, and in fact in the German Empire, for the Duchy, though the property of the King of the Netherlands, is part of the Bismarckian Empire. But between these two stations, though we looked out very carefully, we could distinguish nothing to mark the frontier. I don't know what we expected to see. Perhaps we should not know a frontier if we saw one. They do not have

those things in England. If they had only run up a wire fence—and wire-fencing is cheap enough—it would have satisfied us.

We stayed at Luxemburg till the next train in order to dine, and then went on toward Metz. We had been very lucky in empty carriages hitherto, but at some place about half-way to Metz a mob of unsavoury third-class passengers were crammed into our carriage. It was a hot day and we did not like our company. Presently my husband addressed me across the carriage in an extemporised Latin couplet—

> "Omnibus hominibus hoc sit nimis notum
> Lotharingiæ populum nunquam esse lotum."

It was a pity that he used the German pronunciation of Latin, and that he had not noticed that there was a clergyman present; for a priest who was sitting in one corner of the carriage immediately entered into an elaborate Latin speech, defending the cleanliness of his countrymen. Latin conversation is not a strong point with Englishmen, so my husband answered in French, and gave him to understand that he would accept his word for it that the "populus Lotharingiæ" did wash sometimes, but that it must have been a long time ago. This seemed to

please him, for he went into the most astonishing fits of laughter, and wrote down the couplet on the fly-leaf of his breviary, after which he talked hard all the way to Metz.

The population of Metz consists of soldiers and nursemaids. Whether the soldiers are there because of the nursemaids, or the nursemaids because of the soldiers, we do not know; but the attraction of the one class for the other is notorious even in England. There are said to be 18,000 soldiers in Metz, and as the population is about 50,000 there must therefore be 32,000 nursemaids, which is rather *embarras de richesse* for the military. Perhaps, however, the 50,000 includes children, clergymen, and hotel-keepers, so the disproportion may be smaller. There must be quite a hundred persons belonging to those classes.

If the soldiers wore uniforms that fitted better they would look more imposing. But they make up in numbers for their other defects. I cannot believe that we got at the right statistics, for I am sure we saw 180,000 soldiers, though of course we may have sometimes seen the same ones over again—a point which it is impossible to settle, as all German soldiers in the same uniform are as exactly alike as sheep

or negroes; and unless a man does not wear spectacles there is no way of distinguishing him from his fellows.

We saw a detachment of an Uhlan regiment riding down one side of a square, and I believe we were the only people who looked at it. Soldiers in Metz are like smuts in London: nobody takes any account of them.

These soldiers, of course, were all Germans. They talked and thought, and ate and smoked, and stared and swaggered Prussian Empire, and the citizens crept about in an apologetic manner between their elbows.

We went to look at the cathedral after we had found our hotel: it (the cathedral, not the hotel) is a beautiful building, especially on the outside, though the new colour of the stone, where it has been mended since the war, gives it rather a spotty appearance. We went in: the great nave was empty, save at the western end, where several chairs were turned towards a chapel on the northern side. The altar of the chapel was profusely decorated, and before the railed-off part that answered to a chancel was an immense crown suspended in the air with long festoons going from it to the pillars. It was composed of white muslin and imitation

blush roses. Some real fir-trees had been cut and placed along the walls below.

Some women were still kneeling before the chapel, and a service had apparently just been concluded.

Before the high altar some men were preparing an enormous catafalque, for there was to be a grand funeral here on the morrow. Their noise and movements were a little annoying as we walked about and looked at the rich windows and admired the spring of the lofty roof, but it was astonishing how slight the sound was in so big a place.

My husband wanted to go up into the tower; and as I have no fancy for climbing narrow steep stairs, I stayed below and wandered down to the lower end of the nave and sat down.

A good many people passed in at one door and out at another, just stopping to say a little prayer in the middle. A group of German soldiers came in: one was smoking a cigarette, and laughed and talked a good deal; another one came into the middle of the nave, and stood facing the high altar, made a genuflexion, bowed his head, and said a little prayer in so simple and natural a manner that it a little surprised me. He was a gentlemanly-looking young fellow,

and an officer; and it was not quite what my experience of Germans had led me to believe was common among them. After he rejoined his companions they went out again, the rest of them apparently not even chaffing him for his little act of piety.

Presently my husband came down and expatiated at great length upon the beauties of the view from the tower. Metz, lying in a great plain, with her girdle of hills, had all been visible; and the three water-ways into the city, and the fortifications, were all to be seen; he said the effect was very beautiful, and I have no doubt it was, but I was glad I did not go up all the same. I have no enthusiasm for winding stairs and narrow passages and cathedral dust on one's shoulders and knees. He was in a dreadfully puzzled state over one thing. The verger, or the German equivalent of one, told him that a certain fort he pointed out to him was what sounded to him like "Fort Cinquante-un."

"What a very odd name—Fort Fifty-one," thought my husband. "German idea of course; no doubt it had a rather pretty French name, but I wonder they didn't call it something German while they were about it. What is

the next one called?" he asked the verger. "Fort Saint Julien," he replied.

He puzzled over it dreadfully until he came down and investigated the matter, and then he discovered that it was "Fort Saint Quentin," which had taken such an important part in the war, and which he had always thought of as "Fort St. Kwintin."

Leaving the cathedral, we went through the town, crossing the canal and river by good stone bridges. Upon one of the latter I stopped to make a little sketch, and was immediately surrounded by a group of children all deeply interested in my drawing. The exclamations that came over my shoulder were curious: "My God, it is good!" "Jesus, how like it is!" all in the most simple way from childish lips.

My husband, by way of reproving their profane exclamations, turned upon one of these babes, and, forgetting the difference in the Catholic arrangement of the Decalogue, asked in German: "Can you say the Third Commandment?"

"Ja wohl!" was the answer, with the sauciest of grins, "Gedenke des Sabbathtages, dass du ihn heiligest," and so on; which was not at all what *we* wanted on this Sunday evening.

The town did not seem in a very prosperous condition. It had somewhat of an empty, swept, and garnished appearance, and strongly reminded one of the house in the parables. Yet, to do the Germans justice, their behaviour, as far as we saw, was certainly not demoniacal. Indeed they seemed to be friendly disposed towards the populace, especially to the nursemaids in the public gardens. Only one of them spoke to us,—a soldier, not a nursemaid, —and that was when we got up on some grassy ramparts overlooking a road. We were not going to steal the ramparts or shell the road, but the sentinel came and asked us to go down. He was very polite and civil about it, so for once we understood German directly and walked off, for he had a gun with him. They seem jealous over their possessions in this country.

There is a corner of the walls overlooking the great plain towards the south-west, where the river enters the city. A very high wall is built up from the river, and on this are houses and public gardens. In the angle is a bastion, with seats upon it; and here we sat and looked over the green plain, and watched the river far down below us, and some pretty gardens and trees on the other side. It was very pleasant

there; the air was soft and fresh, and the sun bright. The plain was striped all manner of shades of green and gold, with the little hedgeless fields all over it. There were a few clumps of willows, but not many, and the encircling hills were blue in the mist of the summer afternoon.

Of course we thought and talked of the war. No one seems able to forget the war in Metz. Its late presence is much more apparent here than in Strasburg—perhaps because the fortifications are so much more in the way than they are in Strasburg: the town is so small that one is hardly ever out of sight of some part of them, at least of the forts upon the hills; also the number of soldiers cannot be overlooked, and the town still has a mourning and desolate appearance.

We slept at Metz, and left the next day for our real destination, the Vosges.



CHAPTER III.

ZABERN.

It was dull weather when we left Metz, the country looked gray and marshy and dismal. We looked out eagerly for the graveyards that mark the sites of the battlefields, but did not see any. This year the crosses are to be taken up and the fields ploughed, and the grain sown over the bones of the dead. It must be a melancholy year in many a French and German home when the very graves of their dead are hidden from them.

A German lady who was in the carriage with us petted and fondled her big stolid-looking husband after the manner of so many of her countrywomen. I don't know if the men generally like it: this one apparently did not. To an Englishwoman this public tribute of affection seems rather repulsive and decidedly objectionable; but then Englishwomen are considered cold all the world over.

I hope it was not my unsympathetic presence that made the big German scowl at his wife when she pushed her cotton-clad hand under his arm (German ladies have apparently an inexhaustible predilection for cotton gloves), or snarl when she playfully pulled his ear and tapped his knees, but he was evidently uncomfortable under the process. Perhaps he had travelled out of Germany, and observed the manners and customs of civilised people.

We seemed a long time coming to the mountains, but it was really only three hours. At last a line of blue hills appeared on the horizon. We were very much excited, and really we had no occasion to be so, for we had all along expected to find the mountains in their old place. Yet I am sure for a moment I at least experienced a sort of Christopher Columbus feeling as the blue hills lay like a low cloud upon the distance.

The Vosges are not very high about this end, but they strike away in a long line that gets bluer and bluer. Saarburg was the first station that we stopped at that was really in our desired land. It is a little old crumbling town, with a dilapidated wall around it, all old and falling to pieces together; the hills rise from

the back of it, and it has seen plenty of good fighting in its time. It does not look as though it will see very much more; it has ceased to be a place of much importance, and I should not think anybody would take it on a repairing lease.

Now we were really in the Vosges. Leaving Saarburg we plunged straight into the mountains. On each hand of us rose wooded hills, their rocky sides of red and purple sandstones showing warm and bright.

Acacia trees were largely planted along the cuttings; their intense delicate green branches waved beside the carriage windows. Every few moments we caught glimpses of lovely wooded valleys stretching away to the right and left. Then we flew shrieking into tunnels whose entrances were overhung with delicate blue harebells and long fronds of ferns. It was a lovely country, and we knew this valley of the Zorn to be the least lovely portion of it.

We had agreed to stop at Zabern (or Saverne), as being a good starting-point for our excursion. The railway here intersects the narrowest portion of the mountains, and separates the Central from the Lower Vosges.

Zabern itself is a little red sandstone town built on a low hill beside a river, and having

behind it a wooded mountain with a castle upon the top of it. Across the river, on the other side, rises another wooded mountain, also surmounted by a castle, and smaller hills close it in on all sides except towards the north-east, where the river and the railway run towards the great plain of the Rhine.

It is a wonderfully picturesque little place. Waterways abound, and down almost every opening between the houses could be seen a rushing stream, with women kneeling beside it, or on planks floating on it busily washing heaps of blue and white clothes. The houses are old, many of them timbered, and the streets were paved, clean, and pretty. An immense amount of sawing of wood was going on in the streets before the houses. Trees had been brought in from the forests, and were being split up into logs.

The rain had begun to fall before we left the station, but nobody seemed to mind it very much. We walked up the hill towards the church with a group of blue-clad, flaxen-haired, well-shod children, who were evidently going into a schoolhouse that stood opposite the sandstone-paved flag, one side of which was occupied by the Schloss.

This was a large building, not particularly beautiful, being in the pseudo-classical style, but built of red sandstone, which gives a warm tone to the whole. It had been a palace of the Bishop of Strasburg, who had formerly had great powers and possessions in this place. The present building was erected in 1779 by Cardinal de Rohan from designs by Salius de Montfort: it is now used as a barrack.

The upper side of the Platz is occupied by hotels, and in the centre of it is a very well-carved unicorn. We stopped before it.

"How very like," we said.

"Quite refreshing," my companion added; "but I don't see any vestige of the 'grand old man' anywhere. This is not fair to both sides."

Truly the unicorn bore a most remarkable resemblance to our late lamented Premier. It was a perfect likeness, and was comforting to us, for it reminded us that his glory still lived, and if we were sacrificed by the wild inhabitants of these regions, our lives, or their equivalents, would be required at their hands.

In a corner by the Schloss are some steps leading to the church. It is a Gothic church, dated 1490 on the north outer wall. Inside a

very good effect is produced by ribs of red sandstone on the white roof. It is large, clean, well kept, and seated throughout like an English church. There is some very good modern German wood carving about the three altars; gilding and colours are largely used, but all with good taste, so there is an absence of tawdriness. There is some beautiful glass in the Lady Chapel,—old German, I should fancy; and I was much struck by an old grotesque on the base of one of the pillars, of which I made a rough sketch. Some scenes from the Passion in the Lady Chapel are ascribed to Hans Wohlgemuth.

There was not much to keep one very long in the church, but it was pouring so with rain we could not go out. We managed to run round the corner of the church to where the door of the museum opened on to a little paved yard. After ringing there for some time and not getting any one to answer us we went in, and found ourselves in a kind of vestry at the end of the Lady Chapel where benches and extra candlesticks were kept. Some doors led out of this place into the museum, but they were locked.

Our repeated ringing at last brought an old man to our help. He was very courteous, and

took us into the museum—a room with a groined roof, once the refectory of the monastery from its appearance—which contained several specimens of Gallic, Roman, and Franconian antiquities, some armour, and two immense portraits of the late Emperor of the French and his wife.

There was little of extraordinary interest to people coming from the British Museum in the collection, though it was a good museum for a small town to possess. We accepted the old man's invitation to go upstairs to see some old prints of Zabern and the castle on the hill —the Hoh-Barr. He took us along some stone passages, up a winding little staircase, and then into a room. The view from the windows was more interesting to me than the old prints, though these were curious.

This little room, which was part of the church buildings, was perched on a rock, below which lay a small garden and the great Schloss, upon which one looked down. Beyond and around were the town, the river, and the wooded mountains.

It still continued to pour with rain. We asked the old man the way to the best hotel in the town, and took leave of him. The streets were

washed quite shining by the deluge of water that came upon them. Fortunately we had not far to go, for the best hotel was the one at the corner of the Platz.

We were shown upstairs into a long room, with windows all on one side overlooking the Platz, but of course all carefully closed and curtained, and they had seemingly been so for some weeks. A long table was laid for the table d'hôte which had just begun; some dozen men were seated at it, and the remaining places were quickly filled up.

I give a description of this dinner, as it is characteristic of all the dinners at the German hotels in Alsace, the cooking being more or less good in different places:—

Soup, hot, brown water, with a crust of bread in it.

Boiled salt fibre, served with lumps of waxy potato, and pickled turnip in saucers.

Goat, or some other animal, in brown sauce, with excellent French beans cooked in butter; both very good.

Rings of fried fish, with piquant sauce (made of vinegar, oil, and chopped raw onion), served with slices of lemon, and pickled gherkins; very good indeed.

Roast beef, with salad; the latter always delicious, the former variable, but generally fairly good.

Patés de foie gras; abominable to me, but doubtless delightful to those who like them.

Stewed cherries and sponge-cakes.

The above was a good specimen of the average Alsatian midday meal. Of course the meats varied: often poultry was served with salad, and the beef took the place of the goat's flesh; and often, alas! the paté de foie gras, which at least was unobjectionable to look at, was replaced by some awful compound of some inside portions of animals—we never asked names: it may have been an innocent calf's brains, but it may not have been: we let the dish go by in silence.

Of course a good deal of steam arose from this dinner, which occupied over an hour to consume; the room was full, but not a man would open a window.

At its close I rushed to a window and unfastened it. The glass had been so covered with moisture one could see nothing through it. To my surprise and delight I found blue sky outside, and soft white clouds. The rain was over and gone.

We paid our moderate reckoning—5 marks 60 pfennigs, which included a bottle of wine, for the two of us—and went on our way rejoicing. We were going to walk to the Hoh-Barr.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOH-BARR.

THE walk to the Hoh-Barr was taken under very pleasant circumstances. We had expected a wet afternoon, and it had turned out brilliantly fine; we had had a good dinner, and were at the beginning of what promised to be a very delightful tour; and the walk itself was a very pretty one.

We had left our luggage at the station, so had no impediments to our progress beyond our waterproofs and my sketching materials; and although my husband carried them all, I still found my first mountain walk a little trying. The wonderfully fine air of this region had not yet given me extra walking powers; in a few days I should think nothing of such a walk as this.

We soon left the town behind us, and passed along pleasant grassy fields with fruit-trees growing in them. The road was very good,

and the view down the valley of the Zorn beautiful. After a while we left the fields and entered a wood. We had been going uphill all the way, but in the wood the path rapidly became steep and rocky.

There was little or no view to be seen while we were in this wood, which was composed of oaks and beeches, while ferns and rich mosses covered the red earth. Presently we came out upon a sort of ridge, where the trees grew thinner. We turned and looked back, and beheld a magnificent view of the valley beneath us, stretching away to the shadowy Upper Vosges.

We would not stay long here, for the top of the mountain was not very far off, and the view from there promised to be infinitely finer; so we trudged on, enjoying the pure fresh air that smelt doubly sweet after the rain. Quantities of bilberries grew in little bushes all over the ground, and tall purple and pale lilac campanulas raised their heads above the ferns.

After a somewhat rocky bit of path we came upon a broad road. This was the carriage road that wound round the hill, and by which we might have come up the whole way if we had desired it; but we had preferred the footpath

through the woods. This roadway led us now beside a huge mass of rocks, with birches and brambles, oaks and ferns, growing out of every crevice. Built up from this rock, and seemingly of it, were immense walls, so fitted into the rock that sometimes it was hard to tell which was rock and which castle. On the other side of the broad grass walk was a row of magnificent trees, and between these trees were glimpses of a view the like of which I had never seen before.

Straight down from our feet went the precipitous side of the mountain, clothed in trees whose topmost branches lay beneath us. At the bottom of this steep descent lay a broad valley, green and gold in bands of corn and wine, for vineyards were planted beside the grain. Little villages of a deep warm red colour stood on this vast plain; and far away in the distance rose,—now gleaming, now shadowy, a point no bigger than a needle, but alive to us with beautiful memories of form and colour,—the spire of Strasburg Cathedral.

For some moments we could look at nothing else; it was like finding an old friend in a new world. We forgot the mountains beyond; then their shadowy lines claimed us. "The

Black Forest!" we said. "Is it possible that we can see it from here?" It was quite possible; and a long range of its hills we saw,—very shadowy, very looming, very distant, for the afternoon was slightly hazy,—in the distance. They were a lovely background for the brilliant plain.

To our right the Hoh-Barr joined a long range of wooded hills running right down the whole length of the Rhine valley. Of course we only saw the nearest of them, and very beautiful they were, all clothed in trees, save one bleak summit—the Schneeburg. We were to go over that, my husband said, the next day, and the view from there would be finer than the one we now saw.

Presently we went into the castle. I made a sketch of the entrance, which was rendered additionally beautiful by the two mountain-ash trees that grow beside it being laden, one with scarlet, the other with crimson, berries. The entrance is in better preservation than the rest of the castle, and exhibits a tremendous thickness and strength of masonry. For some distance it consists of a walled passage, with little rooms concealed in the walls, doubtless for purposes of reconnoitring. In common with most Alsatian castles, the building is so inex-

tricably mixed with its rocky foundation that it is hard to tell which is castle and which is rock; and the original plan of the rocks seems to have guided the builders in their work, for the natural red sandstone is utilised in every possible manner.

The place has now fallen into such a state of ruin that it is impossible to trace out even the ground-plan of it. We were, however, fortunate enough to get a photograph of an old drawing of the Schloss as it was in the days of its glory, which shows it to have been a very considerable place indeed. And it had need to be, for it was in a particularly important position, commanding, as it does, the town of Zabern and the passage by the Zorn valley from the Rhine valley into France.

The castle was originally built in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and restored in 1585 by a bishop of Strasburg, who was a great prince in these parts in those days, and to whom most of the town of Zabern also belonged; but the glory of the bishops of Strasburg has departed with that of the Holy Roman Empire.

The place is such a complete ruin now that many of the highest parts can only be reached by ladders. The little Romanesque chapel,

however, has been restored, and is in good order. Service is said there once a month, when people from Zabern come up to it.

The forester and his wife, who inhabit a little cottage built out of the ruins of the castle, are the only people who live on the mountain now. Their little poor-looking house, with hens and pigs, and broken beer bottles and dust-heaps, looked melancholy and contemptible among so much fallen grandeur. Cottages and pigs are very good things in their way, and look very well among fields, but not in the courtyard of a fine old castle: they gave an additional squalor and melancholy to the scene.

A few Germans had evidently been up there that day for a morning glass, as three tumblers stood on a stained deal table before the house, and five or six dozen empty beer bottles lay around.

An old sow resented our approach in such a very noisy manner that a plain, hard-featured woman came to the door of the cottage and looked at us. Seeing we were not Germans, and therefore not likely to require more than one bottle of beer, she took very little notice of us, though she tried to silence a very yelping dog that followed us about.

We wandered about over the uneven ground, and tried to trace out the various inner courtyards and halls, but it was too ruinous to make out much. We came across a very deep well lined with ferns. Brambles and ferns and trees sprang in odd nooks and corners of the building, and made the place very picturesque.

There was another refreshment place on the other side of the courtyard—a gorgeous building, plastered, and with real stained glass in the windows, and more empty beer bottles than I should like to have counted. Hundreds of them lay in all directions under the rocks, so we concluded that this must be a favourite resort of the German military from the Schloss in the town.

There was much that was beautiful in the ruins, but my husband answered all my exclamations of delight by saying it was not nearly so fine as the Hohen Konigsberg would be, and every one we spoke to on the subject said the same.

The mountain on the north-east side is very steep, and commands a fine view of the valley of the Zorn and a castle-crowned mountain opposite, the Klein-Geroldseck; and lower down, perched on an arm of the wooded mountain,

rises a huge tower, the Gross-Geroldseck. The barons and bishops must have had pretty much their own way in the Zorn valley in old times, with all these fortresses commanding it.

We wandered about the ruins a little more. My husband, following the Englishman's most cherished traditions, tried how near he could get to breaking his neck by climbing up to the topmost pile of rocks and masonry in the middle of the castle. As the guide-book remarked that the highest points were only accessible by ladders, he of course had a specially fine time of it by getting up without a ladder.

I did a little sketching, and as we had to leave Zabern at four, in order to get to Wasselonne to meet an omnibus that Baedeker stated would meet the train, and then go to Wangenburg, we were obliged to leave the Hoh-Barr long before we wished to do so.

The walk down-hill of course was beautiful, the sweet smell of the woods and the newly-cut hay in the fields adding to its enjoyment. The weather had become simply delightful; the sky soft and blue, with a few white clouds upon it,—just enough to give the charm of swiftly-passing shadow over the landscape.

We had a little time left to wander about

Zabern when we got there, and to note how clean and tidy all the people were. Coming from Belgium, the neatness and good clothing struck us forcibly. In all Zabern I never saw a barefooted woman or child; every one had coarse, but good, sound clothing, and there was no absolute poverty visible.

Several sisters of mercy were at the station carrying little black boxes, containing, I suppose, their small stock of clothes. Zabern is Catholic, and, I believe, always has been so.

We went third-class to Wasselonne, and some very neatly-dressed, tidy peasant women travelled with us. In the next compartment was a set of schoolboys, full of life and fun, and rather noisy over it, but all in good humour.

We went through the beautiful plain where the harvest was being gathered in. About Luxemburg the corn was not yet ripe, but here it was at its full. Field labour seems conducted on different principles here to what it is in England. The fields, to begin with, are long, narrow, hedgeless slips, and the average amount of labour employed upon each slip was one woman, one girl, and one boy. Not a single man was visible anywhere.

The land all about here is owned by peasants,

and each one has his own little strip of corn, of hay, of barley, of vegetables, and so on. I was very anxious to learn how the system worked here, for the crops appeared to me to be miserably inferior to those raised in England.

Vineyards, of course, we passed in plenty; most of the peasants have their own strip of vineyard, too, where it is practicable. In point of fact, this plain we were traversing now was an upland plain above the great Rhine plain, and was separated from it by a long line of foot hills.

We passed several little towns, or large villages, their red and brown tiled roofs looking warm and comfortable. One village, Maursmünster, possessed a remarkably fine Romanesque church, which we wished we had time to stop and see. It once belonged to a powerful Benedictine abbey. The façade is late Romanesque, and it has the characteristic Alsatian vaulted vestibule, and fine fourteenth-century windows along the side.

Arrived at Wasselonne, or Wasselnheim as the Germans call it—they don't know any better—we were doomed to disappointment. Baedeker had warned us that there was no

regular communication with Wangenburg; and there was not—nor irregular either—in fact none at all. We should have been content with an irregular omnibus too, in default of a better.

Now we had a deep and trusting affection for Baedeker, and a serene confidence in all his works. He had served us well in many lands, and we did not think he would play us false in a second-rate sort of province after he had piloted us through empires so well. So we forgave him this first error, and made up our minds to stay in Wasselonne.

It was not an attractive place to us, though it might have been to a farmer, for there was a great quantity of fine manure in the dirty little lanes of the town. We found the principal street after a little while, and walked along it looking for the hotel Baedeker had recommended, the *Goldner Apfel.* We found it at last, a low white building with the comfortable look of an old-established inn about it. The inside did not belie its external reputation. We were shown upstairs into a large room with several windows in it, and beyond that into a large comfortable bedroom with old walnut presses, and good beds, and a carpet. Everything was

very clean and good, though in a certain sense homely.

We were much struck by the enormous size of some of the boards in the floor: the trees that produced them must have been of an immense girth. There was nothing to see in the town, so we went to bed early, and ordered a carriage to be ready at eight the next morning.

CHAPTER V.

WASSELNHEIM TO WANGENBURG.

We were not sorry to leave Wasselnheim, except for the comforts of the *Goldner Àpfel* or *Pomme d'Or*—they are diglot here—whose like we probably should not encounter that night at least. But Wasselnheim was not in the mountains, and we had been rather tricked into going there at all.

The morning was fine, and our drive along the level road was very pleasant. We had a kind of carriage common in this part of the world—a sort of single victoria, of a ramshackly and heavy make, yet comfortable for a long drive, and quite good enough for a walking tour.

Our driver was a very interesting man, and rejoiced in the gorgeous name of Kaiser. We liked his quiet manner, and a certain wiry strength about his face. My husband encouraged him to talk to us, and he was by no means unwilling to do so, though at first he

was shy of saying anything on the subject we particularly desired information upon, namely, the feelings of the people with regard to the German occupation of Alsace.

He soon, however, seemed to convince himself that we were not German spies in disguise, and then the torrent of his talk poured forth freely enough. Yet he was not garrulous, not even talkative for a Frenchman; what he had to say he said quietly, and with great earnestness, and apparently without any exaggeration.

He had been a grenadier in the French army, and had been in Metz during the siege, and was seven times under fire, yet escaped without a wound. In one battle he was under "un véritable feu du diable," when the bullets came like rain. He appeared to have rather liked the fighting part of it, and found it preferable to being idle in Metz.

According to his account there was an immense sacrifice of life in the hospitals, where the poor fellows were neglected and uncared for. He complained bitterly of Bazaine as a man who cared only for his own comfort and enjoyment, while his soldiers were undergoing privations and hardships. All manner of con-

tradictory orders were given, and down to the very end Bazaine kept on declaring that things were all right, when they were hopelessly wrong and muddled. But for all his selfishness and bad management our friend sturdily disbelieved that the marshal had sold Metz to the Germans. He was a failure as a general, but not a traitor.

The road lay for some way along fields. We went through a quaint little village called Romansweiler, where a great number of the houses were built of wood, with curious old weather-beaten gray balconies, and great heaps of faggots in the yards. Here, too, we became further acquainted with one of the Alsatian's ruling passions—his love of manure. Mark Twain's delightful romance of the manure heap in the Black Forest recurred to our minds as we passed the fragrant piles.

Presently we left the plain and entered the mountains, the road being cut in the side of a lovely valley with a park-like wide grassy bottom, and clumps of magnificent trees standing in it. I never saw a more lovely view of its kind than this green valley with a clear stream winding through it, its finely-grouped trees, a mass of tall Lombardy poplars towards the end, and a magnificent view of forest-

covered mountains fading away into a blue perspective.

The road we drove along was between pine woods, whose pink and gray stems rose tall and straight and branchless for an enormous height, and then spread in a thick canopy of green overhead. The ground was covered with ferns, with here and there bushes, with bright scarlet berries gleaming on them. The light was so green and soft that it was pleasant beyond expression on a sunny day, and the rich red banks of earth upon our left, where the hill rose up, were covered with the delicate leaves and bright fruit of the wild strawberry. As we wound round, the road ever getting a little higher as we passed from one hill to another, we entered a beech wood; the silver gray trunks were as tall and straight as the pine-trees, and little flecks of brown mosses looked like flickering shadows upon their satin stems. The ground was all of a dusky red with last year's leaves, and as one looked up the long perspective of the mountain-side, the gray stems became blue and ghostlike in the distance.

I never could decide which I liked best, the green and brown of the fir forests, or the gray and pink of the beeches; whichever I happened

to be going through at the time I thought most lovely.

We met several carts coming down the road; they were all much alike, were invented in the time of the Pharaohs, and are composed of long slender fir poles roughly fastened together, and mounted on wheels. They were filled with logs and bark from the sawmills that abound in the mountain valleys.

We came to one of these little valleys soon—Freudeneck by name—"coin de plaisir," as the driver translated it—a tiny green space among the deep pine forests. A lonely forester's house stood there, and a rapid clear stream ran in front of it. A woman and child were standing in the road, the woman cutting the grass by the ditch, and the child receiving it in his pinafore as she cut it. They looked poor, and the woman careworn. Life must be a tolerably quiet affair here among the forests.

All this time I had been observing with longing eyes the ripe clusters of red strawberries by the roadside. At this corner, where the sun came on them, they were particularly enticing. I made a faint suggestion of getting out and walking for a little, but my husband did not seem to think it was worth while, and remarked

that we should find an abundance of fruit farther on.

I yielded, of course, and we drove on as before. Presently the strawberries vanished, and we saw no more for the day. This has been my invariable experience with regard to wild strawberries: they require, like a burglar, to be caught in the act of appearing and taken instantly; they are more fleeting than generosity to a crossing-sweeper on a wet day when one's purse is in one's inside pocket. They are like free boxes at the opera which never come when you want them, but always appear when you have a particular engagement. I shall have other harrowing experiences to relate with regard to the manners and customs of wild strawberries.

This being my first acquaintance with this peculiar species of vegetation, the iron had not yet entered into my soul, and I bore the disappointment with resignation; three weeks later I should have acted differently.

We went on getting higher and higher, and winding round numbers of hills and seeing lovely views every few minutes. Gradually the forests thinned a little, and we came to a wide upland valley, with houses in it scattered

at intervals. Fruit trees grew beside the road. We passed through a scattered village, with a church in it, and finally were put down before a large hotel. This was Wangenburg.

It was a white building, with a large portico, and a sort of rough attempt at combining a flower garden and a biergarten in front. Several people were sitting on chairs and seats in front of the house, and in a few moments we realised our horrible position.

We had come to the Vosges for quiet, for rusticity, for freedom from tourists, and what did we find? Here, right among the mountains, were congregated together a fearful and wonderful assembly of apparently all the fearfullest and wonderfullest large-sized matrons of Germany. They all wore short full dresses, with knitted shawls across the shoulders; some wore caps of a greasy and black cotton net appearance; others would have looked better if they had had anything on their heads besides their scalps.

They were knitting, most of them—gossiping all of them. A good many specimens of light-booted, tight-frocked children were stamping about on the gravel or pestering their mammas. The gentlemen, of course, were away from the ladies; they stood in a little group by the yard

door and contemplated our arrival; they all wore white trousers and straw hats, and did not appear to have anything to do and less to talk about.

I said I thought the Vosges was a fraud, and we would go home again; but my husband said we would have dinner first, so we booked two places at the table d'hôte and went out to survey the ruins of an old castle close by.

The road lay through part of the village, which was not particularly picturesque, but was rendered interesting at the present moment by enormous cherry-trees all in full fruit and literally covered with red, and black cherries. A man was standing on a ladder picking some fruit into a basket, and we stopped and asked him to sell us some, but he refused in rather a churlish manner, so we went on our way disgusted.

The castle of Wangenburg is situated in a pine wood, with meadows on one side and a wooded precipice on the other. Like most Alsatian castles it is built on a rocky pile, and the building made to accommodate itself to its natural foundations.

Rocks and castle were now overgrown with bushes and small trees, and on the very topmost walls of the tower a few slender young birches

threw their delicate tassels to the breeze. A deep moat, now dry and bramble-grown, went round the rock. We followed its course, and then scrambled up into the castle itself. Nothing but the outer walls remains, and the place has a desolate well-like air about it. We climbed over the fallen stones towards the precipice side, and, passing under a fine archway of thirteenth-century work still in good preservation, we descended by means of a winding path to the base of the great walls. The view from this side was beautiful, looking down into a valley and towards the wooded mountains of the interior of the Vosges.

Growing among the stones outside the now vault-like castle I found a little green leaf with deep red spots like blood drops upon it. But for the red stains it would have been a common looking little leaf enough. I only found it in this one place, a corner of the castle near a great rift in the wall that had been made on the precipice side. I do not know its botanical or any name, but I found a little story attached to its growing here.

In that vague and shadowy time, popularly known as "the Middle Ages," the usual baron of the period lived in this castle of Wangen-

burg with the not uncommon domestic appendages of a beautiful daughter and a houseful of quarrelsome soldiers. Alsace was the paradise of free fighters in those days, and our particular baron had a more than ordinary pleasure in the delights of war. Of his wife we find no mention. Barons' wives rarely seem to have lived long in those days. They usually present an infant to their lord and then depart this life, or are helped out of it in a forcible manner.

Our baron bold was far too much occupied with his fights and his boar hunts, his drinks and his feasts, to pay much attention to such an unimportant person as a daughter; so the Lady Gertrude was left pretty much to herself in her bower, with an old woman for an attendant; and having nothing better to do she did as all heroines of romance and most commonplace girls do, and fell in love. Unfortunately she had omitted to ask her father's advice in this matter, and the usual disastrous results occurred,—Gertrude loved one young man, and her father, having in one of his sober moments recollected her existence, pledged her to another.

"Another" did not suit Gertrude, as "another" never does (we cannot give his name as we do not know it). She wept, and her father stormed.

He shut her up, and she communicated with her lover by signals from her little window. The baron discovered this, of course, and with a party of his men waylaid the luckless lover on the way to his appointment one early morning, and, carrying him underneath his lady-love's window, pierced him with many wounds, and left him there dead for her eyes to feast on.

The distracted girl raved and tore at her barred window; her shrieks rang over the wooded valley, but no one paid any attention to her cries—shrieks were too common in barons' castles in those days to interest anybody.

All day she watched the body. Towards night her shrieks grew quiet, and a dull stupor came over her. Her father thought her will was broken in to his now, and ordered the body to be removed, at the same time unfastening her prison door.

Gertrude sat in the middle of the floor taking no notice of anything after the night came on until the moon rose. Then, for it was the hour when her lover had sought her on many and many a night, she rose, and going down passed by a little door (whose arch still remains) out on the narrow ledge above the precipice.

A dark stain upon the ground caught her

dazed eyes. In a moment she regained her lost consciousness. With a shriek that startled all the inmates of the castle, she flung herself upon the bloody leaves, and, grasping a handful of them to her breast, threw herself over the dark precipice into the valley beneath.

Since then, says the story, the leaves that grow on this particular spot have red marks as of blood upon them. What the leaves were like before this event our particular history did not relate.

There was great excitement outside the hotel when we came back; the diligence that meets the trains at Romansweiler had just arrived.

Wangenburg, we learnt, is a great summer resort of people from neighbouring parts of Germany, and the Alsace plain, on account of the great purity of the air and the bracing effect of the pine forests.

There were a great many people at the table d'hôte—seventy, I should think—and all more or less German, noisy, ill-dressed, and desperately hungry. The meal was a fairly good one, except for one or two fearful compounds of calves' interior arrangements which would have been better consigned to oblivion. A very thin sour wine, white or red according to choice, was

supplied in half bottles to each person. It was rather like amiable vinegar, but had a certain amount of restorative power about it, as we found all the Alsatian wines had.

I believe we attracted a good deal of attention by using our forks for the purpose of conveying our food to our mouths, instead of shoveling the meat on to our knives with them. No doubt it seemed singular to these people, especially when we used a spoon to eat preserved cherries with. But we did not see the feat here that we once saw in Switzerland, when a German gentleman ate a boiled egg with a knife! It was a clever performance, the only reason it was not shown to us here was because there were no eggs. But for difficulties connected with the motion of fluids, the Germans would balance their soup and wine on their knives.

There were a good many children at the dinner. I should not say that children were taken half-price in this neighbourhood, for the main object of their parents seemed to be to treat them as Strasburg geese, and to cram as much food into them as they could possibly hold. They were all pasty-faced even in this delightfully healthy air, not a rosy pair of cheeks among them.

Coffee was brought in in large glasses after dinner for those who ordered it; some preferred to take it out of doors, and seemed disposed to pass the afternoon in that mild recreation.

For our part, we wanted to get away into the loneliness and quiet of the woods, so we paid our bill, shouldered our luggage, and set off on our first fully-equipped mountain walk.



CHAPTER VI.

OVER THE SCHNEEBERG TO NIDECK.

BEFORE we reached the end of the village it began to rain. Nothing short of an avalanche or an earthquake would have turned us back to the din and gossip and petty life of a health-resort hotel. We are not misanthropic, but we lay no claim to hyper-philanthropy—if there is such a word, for the thing itself is rare; and if we do not hate our fellow-man, we love him, when he talks German, no better than he deserves.

I never shall forget the beauty and the freshness and the heavenly quiet of those pine woods on that afternoon. It rained, rained all the time we were in them, but we were only conscious of it by a light spray falling like dew between the branches, and a tender grayness of distance far away among the red pines. Our road lay along the winding shoulder of the

Schneeberg, ever getting higher and higher. On each side of us was the pine forest, trees growing seventy and eighty high without a branch, and then spreading like palms at the top, and making a thick roof over our heads. The path was just a levelled track between the trunks of the trees, with here and there one felled to keep it from slipping away at some steep bit. It was soft and pleasant to walk upon, carpeted by fir needles, and was constructed by the Vosges Club (a sort of one-horse foreigneering Alpiné Club), of which we shall have more to say later on.

Tumbled about under the trees were great blocks of stone, green with the moss of ages, and hiding long fronds of ferns in their hollows. There were no flowers or underwood, only the deep moss among the fir needles and the tumbled stones.

Looking down the side of the hill as we went higher up, we saw the tops of the lower pines blue and shadowy in the rain; no view could be seen beyond them, but they were quite sufficient in themselves; we did not care about a view while we were in the forest, and our enjoyment here was so great that we were not much disconcerted by the thought that we

should probably see nothing from the top of the mountain.

It was the stillest place I was ever in. Not a voice of a bird or a hum of an insect did we hear the whole way. Once we met a man—a charcoal-burner from his look (of the charcoal, charcoaly)—coming down the path, and away under the trees we saw the smoke of a wood fire and one or two men seated by it.

Crossing the road and dashing down into the depths below were bright little streams—their faint ripple was the only sound that broke the stillness. In winter they were torrents from the snows above, as we could see by the boulders that marked their rough beds; now they were tiny and innocent looking.

Presently the wood became thinner. We had been walking about an hour, and had passed through some beech woods as well as pine. The trees grew at wider intervals, and the ground was covered with bilberry bushes, ferns, and lilac campanulas. Wild raspberry bushes grew in abundance on any open spot, but so high up as this the fruit was not nearly ripe.

It soon ceased to be a wood, for stunted beech trees, flattened by the wind, replaced the stately pines. The air was fresh and bracing,

a little trying nevertheless to walk up hill in to one not yet accustomed to the rarefied air of this altitude, though it was only a little over three thousand feet. Here, too, the rain began to pour in torrents, great masses of vapour rolled in the valley beneath us, and stole up the mountain towards us in a way unpleasantly suggestive of fogs and getting lost.

I can't think why we enjoyed standing in the wet grass, under a beech-tree in pouring rain, with a prospect of losing the main object of our walk; but we did enjoy it immensely, and were as happy as possible, and insisted so strenuously that it was going to clear that presently to our astonishment it did. The clouds rolled away from the hidden summit of the bare rocky Schneeberg, a rift of blue appeared over the very top, the vapour fled from the valleys, a new world of wood and pasture and village opened out before us, and shadowy ranges appeared in the distance.

We gathered up our burdens, turned, and fled. We went up the rocky paths in an ecstasy of delight. Presently we left the stunted beech wood and came upon the ling-covered summit. It was still a good way up to the top, and every step we went revealed fresh beauties to us.

With a most astonishing swiftness the clouds had cleared away. The mountains by which we had come yesterday from Zabern lay away to the north-east, beyond them the golden plain of the Rhine stretching for miles and miles to the right and left, and beyónd that again the looming Black Forest.

This was practically very much the view that we had yesterday from the Hoh-Barr, whose castle towers we saw far away beneath us at the end of a long spur of hills; only it was greater in extent, for we could see the Upper Vosges where they stretched away towards Mayence. The shadowy pointing Strasburg spire could of course be plainly seen.

When we reached the summit a new and glorious view was presented to us on the other side. Range after range of mountains, blue as the deepest heaven with that wonderful Alsatian blue, rolled away like waves of a far-reaching sea. Close at hand below our feet the sombre pine forest clothed them in a dusky green that turned from indigo to azure in the distance. Here and there like spots of sunshine a gleam of gold told where some fertile valley lay among the hills, and over all the moving clouds threw shadows ever passing and repassing. We were too far off

to see more than dim specks for houses even in the valley beneath us, and all this wide mountain region towards the west looked absolutely wild and unpeopled. Except in the valleys this was really the case, the mountains being left quite wild, save for an occasional forester's house. To the west was the plain of Lorraine, and far away very distant mountains.

The keen delicious air was like a tonic after our walk; it was fresh without being chilly, and was sufficient to repay us for our trouble without the view. The very top of the Schneeberg is crowned by a heap of rocks, and on the flattest part of these is a diagram fixed showing the principal points of interest in the view.

We did not see this diagram at first, and my husband, trusting to instinct and a map, went into raptures of delight in what he supposed to be German over a silvery streak in the distance that he thought was the Rhine. "Das Rhein, Das Rhein, das deutscher Rhein" (grammar not guaranteed), was what he said. I rarely lose my bearings wherever I am, but was getting dreadfully mixed over this, for either the Rhine had proved false to its traditions and altered its course, or else my husband was wrong, and I have a constitutional objection to finding fault

with anybody who is happy, and he was so delighted over his discovery that I felt it would be cruel to cast doubts upon it.

Presently, in climbing about the rocks to get some water for me to drink, he came upon the diagram, and came back to me saying he might have known that no foreign river could speak the truth, that it was not the Rhine at all but the Moselle, and that in a revolutionary country like this one's holiest emotions were outraged and trampled upon. He said he didn't care a twopenny blank about that sort of sparkling Moselle, and it could go and be dammed up if it liked.

I was sorry to see him so put out, so said that I knew it was not the Rhine all along, and even that didn't seem to soothe him a bit. There is no use in having superior information. He recovered almost immediately, however, by fixing in his mind that he could see the castle of Girbaden; and he may have, but I could not.

We had to get down to Nideck before dark, where we hoped to find a lodging for the night, so we had to leave as soon as we could tear ourselves away from the view. Our path lay down the opposite side of the mountain to that by which we had come up. Baedeker, who at

this time was our trusted friend and confidential companion, told us to descend to the south, and that in five minutes we should come to the beginning of a wood where we should find a notice board. As there was only one path through the long grass and ferns, this board struck us as slightly superfluous, but perhaps it was not.

We passed through a low stunted wood, the trees all blown on one side by the prevailing west winds. The ground was covered with ferns, and all the vegetation was of the greenest and brightest. Mossy rocks, little rills, and boggy places abounded in this wood and made it a most enticing and lovely spot, except for sitting down upon.

We went through it rapidly, descending for some distance, and then found ourselves between two good paths, one of which took a higher elevation than the other on the mountain-side.

There was no notice board here. We learned after much experience that it is the invariable custom of the Vosges Club to erect notice boards in places where there is only one path, and to repeat them at intervals to inspire confidence in the traveller's mind. This is kind and thoughtful, and shows a consideration for a tourist's feelings, but they carry this consideration rather

too far, for they do not endeavour to destroy a man's natural self-reliance and right of free will. When there is any doubt about a path they allow him to choose whichever he likes, and to walk in it until he finds it takes him back to where he came from, or that it ends in a pit, or runs over a precipice. Then the traveller, having benefited by his experience, can thoughtfully return and try one or two of the other remaining paths; and as he is sure to hit on the right one at last, no personal dignity need be sacrificed.

It was only after weeks of painful study and an enormous expenditure of language that we fully understood the magnanimity of the Vosges Club. We did injustice to them at first, until we mastered their principle, so we print this public recognition of their services.

Of course we chose the wrong path first, and walked along it for some way before we perceived that it would bring us round the mountains to the Hoh-Barr after a day or two.

We were not quite sure where the Nideck was, but we knew it was not there, for we had been there, so we came back again; and as there was fortunately only one other path to choose from, we went on with an easy sensation of having done our duty.

Presently we found that if we had stuck to the other path we might have taken a short cut from it to a lower level than that on which we stood. It was not worth while now to go back and try it, so we mentioned the Vosges Club a little among ourselves and went on.

There was a steep descent on one side of us with the tallest pine trees I have ever seen growing in it. They must have been fully a hundred feet high, and as straight as arrows. One or two had been either cut or blown down, and that enabled us to see the enormous size and height of those that remained.

We were on one side of a very narrow gorge that ran up into the heart of the Schneeberg. It was all filled with pines, and looked blue and beautiful in its depth. This was to our left. On our right rose an arm of the Schneeberg, thickly grown with pines and almost black in its solemn shades. There was quite a dim twilight in our path from the thick branches, and the glimpses of the outer world were very bright by comparison.

Large black and orange-coloured slugs reposed on our path with unpleasant frequency. I disliked the idea of stepping on their slimy, soft bodies. These and some black horned

beetles were the only living creatures we saw, except a small, ragged, barefooted boy driving a couple of cows. We asked him the way to the Nideck, but he did not know the way there or anywhere else apparently; perhaps he was bribed by the Vosges Club not to make things too simple for strangers.

We went on because we did not feel that it would do to stop, getting lower and lower. One part of the wood near the bottom had the ground completely covered with masses of stone, with the wild oxalis growing in profusion over them. I never saw so vivid a green as its delicate little leaves made under the trees.

We got to the entrance of the gorge-like valley at last, and followed the course of a little brook, and soon we turned the corner of a hill and found ourselves in a cleared space with a little white house standing among some fruit-trees.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NIDECK VALLEY.

THE Forsthaus of the Nideck was a little, prim, white building, with a door in the middle and a window on each side of it, for all the world like a suburban tea-house. It was built on the slope of the hill, and was reached by a little flight of steps from the road, and a tiny garden full of bright flowers and fruit bushes was on one side. It was not in the rustic cottage or romantic style at all, and, except from the presence of a truly magnificent heap of manure, possessed no distinctive Alsatian feature.

The manure was very prominent, to one organ at least, before we saw it, and a fine coffee-coloured solution of it trickled in luscious streaks down beside the steps in front of the door. It was of the best quality, nice and ripe, and must have been an unceasing source of gratification to its owner.

A tall, hard-featured woman came to the

door in answer to a noisy summons from a big dog. She eyed us with extreme disfavour, and replied to our inquiries after a bed and food in a—to us—perfectly unintelligible dialect. She accompanied her speech by a vigorous movement of her arms, which heightened the impression of her being made of wood and having her speech ground out of her.

We entered the house; everything was spotlessly clean, except our footmarks on the white planks. I saw her rueful glance at them and felt sorry for her, but our mud was beyond our own control. We expected to be led upstairs, but she took a key from a nail, and, signing to us to follow her, led us down the steps across the road and a field and into what we had taken to be a cowhouse. There was a loft overhead, and a tidy little room underneath with three beds in it, a stove that had not been used for many a month, a table with one small jug and basin on it, and several wild-boar skins on the floor.

Except for the certainty of damp beds there was nothing to complain of in the room. We liked the idea of having the place all to ourselves; but how far that might prove simply an idea we did not know, for if a belated traveller

on the Schneeberg should turn up here presently and demand shelter, the very commonest humanity would give him the third bed, for there was no other house for several miles.

The woman who brought us there did not condescend to make any inquiries as to our sentiments about the place. She threw a glance of well-satisfied pride round the room, completely overlooking us in the act, and then stalked off. This lady evidently had a soul above innkeeping, and resented us accordingly.

My husband went after her to ask for some water and supper; she never turned in her majestic stalk; but on his getting to the doorway I suppose she remembered his boots, and vouchsafed to call a loose and very shambling maid-servant from some inner room, at the same time giving a reluctant consent to our having some food.

There was a rough plank table and a bench outside the door, and though the manure streams pursued their gentle course beside our feet, we preferred being there to supping in the close room inside. There was a pretty view from here down a sloping pasture, in which our hut stood, and of wooded hills beyond. Black clouds hovered over these and clung about the

towering Schneeberg on our right, and betokened unpleasantnesses for the morrow.

We waited some time for our food, and agreed that if it was going to rain we would rather be rained up here among the mountains than in a stupid village or health-resort hotel.

After we had had our supper we were not quite so confident about it. The bread was very ancient and very sour, the beefsteaks tough and greasy, the coffee and milk alone were good.

We sat on the benches as long as we could bear the cold of the damp evening. Curiosity alone kept us there some time. We were yearning to see a forester. We pictured him to ourselves as looking like a member of the "Ancient Order." The reality was not unlike a seedy gamekeeper.

As it grew darker and the wind moaned among the mountains, and the black clouds closed in about us, we began to feel a little dismal. We called it being tired after our walk, and went to our hut intending to go to bed.

It was pleasant locking out the outside world and feeling that only a plank separated us from wild boars. At least it would have been if the door had locked, but it would not do that in a

satisfactory manner, so we had to put a chair against it.

There were two little windows in the room looking out upon the forests, and I pictured to myself how delightful it would be to lie awake in the morning and watch the early sun rays upon the green forests, and listen to the rushing of the mountain torrent that went down the valley.

We talked of wild boars. My husband was extremely anxious to see one. Every one we had asked had told us that they abounded in the woods, and the skins on our floor testified very strongly to their presence.

I cannot say that I shared his enthusiasm on this point. I would rather see a wild boar at the Zoological Gardens, if I must see him at all, than in these lonely woods, where he might indulge his little eccentricities of upsetting us and ripping us up. I have no enthusiasm about animals, especially dangerous ones, and sincerely hoped that if we saw a boar he would not see us.

The beds were very coarse, very damp, but clean, and there was an abundance of warm quilts and blankets; so we slept well, and woke, as one always does wake in mountain air, monstrously early.

Where was my view from the window? I

rubbed my eyes and looked in vain for it. I might just as well have looked for mountains in Regent Street on a foggy day in November. There was not a trace of them anywhere: a thick gray mist full of rain had settled upon everything.

"What are we to do?" I said drearily.

"We can't stay and dine here," replied my husband viciously. "I wouldn't eat another of those steaks for anything."

"I shall stay in bed," I said. "There is no use in getting up in such weather, and it's awfully cold."

And stay there I did until eight o'clock, when I grew so ravenously hungry that I was forced to get up and seek some breakfast.

The rain compelled us to eat that in the house, but the sickening closeness of the room compelled me to open a window. The forester's energetic wife had received us with the contempt due to our late rising and our solicitude about the rain. She had been scrubbing the floor of the room we were in, and was then finishing up the opposite room. We saw it through the open doors; it was furnished with some expense, and was evidently a very sacred and remarkable place.

While we were waiting patiently for our bread and coffee a gust of wind came into the house, probably through a back door, but our hostess evidently gave us the entire blame of the enormity. With indignation and disgust in every lineament of her expressive countenance, she rushed into our room, and with a violent action flung the window to in a manner highly suggestive of unmitigated disdain.

I had not meant to outrage her feelings, or heap indignities upon her most cherished traditions; but I had evidently done so, and in my innocence I still further offended her.

They had brought us no plates of any sort, the bread reposed on the table, our coffee was in little basins. One knife had been considered quite sufficient for all our wants. I am not very fastidious, but when I have honey I like a plate; we had honey this morning—very sour and dark, but still honey, and we mildly asked for plates.

She commanded herself to bear the situation evidently because we were foreigners and knew no better, and sent the servant in with a couple of saucers out of pity for our effeminacy.

We did not know what to do. The rain poured down in a steady, persistent, unforgiving

manner. Only the nearest objects were visible in the mist. It was very cold; there was no fire to be had, for, to tell the truth, we were not hardy enough to ask for one; besides, we buoyed ourselves up with the vain expectation of its clearing in a few minutes.

We went back to our hut, and I crept into bed for warmth, and my husband smoked and went to the door every five minutes to look at the clouds. They behaved in the most tantalising manner. Every few minutes they would pretend to lift, and make an affectation of going to break, causing my husband to lift his knapsack and me to force on my shrunk and damp boots. Then just as we were ready to go they would turn the whole affair into a heartless joke, and close in darker than ever and send a perfect deluge into the valley.

This trifling with our feelings annoyed us at last. What was this rain that it was to take such liberties with us! We more than half determined to ignore its existence and pay it out by not taking any notice of it. We appealed to the guardian of the Forsthaus. Perhaps, because she saw that we were anxious to go, she relaxed a little, and worked her arm energetically on our behalf, and poured a torrent

of Alsatian (a wild variety of Allemanisch or Swabian patois) in a loud shrill voice upon us. Alsatian did not help us much. My husband had not yet heard enough of it to master its peculiarities, and she apparently despised German and French. My husband tried some Welsh and Maori upon her, but with no effect at all.

The prospect of our not staying to dinner, however, was such a visible relief to her that she managed to make us understand that it never rained here all day, and she thought it was going to clear. As if in league with the inhabitants of the region, sure enough then and there the rain all but ceased. The clouds lifted a little; we saw the valley of the Nideck, down which we were to go. I struggled into my damp boots and ulster: they had been sent into the kitchen to dry, but that desirable end had not been attained. My husband shouldered his knapsack, paid our bill, which was very moderate, and off we started in the fond hope of getting to Nieder-Haslach in time for table d'hôte, and then pushing on to Urmatt. As we came to the turn of the road that led us into the forests it cleared still more. Hope celestial had a short time of it in our breast. Then

down that treacherous rain came again, thicker and faster than ever.

We were on a broad grass path through some woods, and were not at all certain of our way. Some cows were feeding on the path, and a wretchedly cold barefooted lad, with an old sack over his shoulders, was watching them.

He looked so like a little savage that my husband addressed him in all the savage dialects he knew, but to no effect. He was a perfect blank, and not even a delightful imitation of Alsatian could extract a word from him. We comforted ourselves with the reflection that if he had told us anything he would have told us wrong, and went on.

We entered the forest soon, and there the red path under the trees led us down a wild and beautiful glen. A notice board of the Vosges Club showed us the way to the old Nideck Castle, the "Birridge" (Burg), as the forester-ess had called it; we knew it would not take us very much out of our regular road, so we turned aside to see it.

It is now simply a tower built on a rock, and almost overgrown with pines, but it must have commanded the Nideck valley well at one time. A well-known poem of Chamisso's, "The Giant's

Daughter," relates to this tower, and the place is still called by tradition "The Castle of the Giants." A fine view of the broken picturesque valley can be seen from it.

We retraced our steps and came back to our path, which led us down a pretty rapid descent among rocks and pines. Here the rain scarcely penetrated to us at all, and the mist between the trees was not such an ugly element in the scene as might be imagined.

Presently my husband called to me to come to a little ledge on which he had climbed; I did so, and was astonished at the beauty of the scene.

Huge masses of porphyry rose on either side of us, with fantastic pines growing out of their clefts. Almost beneath our feet rushed a torrent of water that leaped down a precipice 80 feet in height, and then wound its way along a lovely wooded gorge shut in on each side by porphyry walls.

The rain had cleared a little; soft whiffs of mountain mist curled about the cliffs and wound in and out among the gigantic pines and the wide-spreading oaks. As if in special concession to our admiration, the sun even came out for a few moments and illuminated the

shining leaves and snowy water, and showed a rift of blue behind the red porphyry walls. It was lovely and wild beyond description. We hurried down the zig-zag path that the Vosges Club have made on the side of the cliff, every moment getting a new view of the beautiful falls.

The path does not descend quite to the bottom of the valley down which the torrent rushes, but keeps to the right under the pine and oak woods. Seen from here the waterfall was even more lovely than from above. And when the sun shone out, and the blue sky appeared behind the old Nideck tower and made the water dance with light, the scene was perfect.

The extreme beauty was very short-lived, however; the rift of blue closed up, the wandering mists among the topmost trees gathered themselves together, and the rain poured down.

We continued our way under the trees, following the course of the river and passing several cleared spaces where logs showed the late presence of man. It seems a dreadful pity to cut wood in this most exquisite valley when there is so much in less lovely places.

The way through the woods was a great deal longer than we had expected. Baedeker had made the whole distance from the Nideck to the high road under two miles, or half an hour's walk. We generally, at least in Switzerland, walk faster than Baedeker's time, but here we had taken at least an hour and a half, allowing for all our stoppages. We had left the Nideck at a quarter-past eleven, and had thought we should easily get to Nieder-Haslach in time for half-past twelve table d'hôte, and it was long past that time when we at last came out of the woods upon the high road.

This road runs down a long narrow winding green valley, perfectly flat, with the Nideck river running through it, and closed in by steep wooded mountains on each side. It was very pretty, not wild and grand like the Nideck valley, but calm and quiet and peaceful.

We knew, from Baedeker, that we had two miles and a half of this road to traverse before reaching Ober-Haslach; but we had yet to learn the perfidy of our guide. The distance from the Nideck had shaken our faith a little, but we still clung to him with an old affection that was not to be lightly cast away.

Among other things he told us to count the sawmills, beyond the fifth we should come to Ober-Haslach. We passed two in quick succession, and said to each other—

"It was a very slight mistake; doubtless it is a very short way to Ober-Haslach, and the two miles and a half referred to the distance from the high road to the Nideck."

One requires a little hope when one trudges along a very muddy road in pouring rain amidst fine scenery that one cannot see. We needed all we could get, especially as we knew we should be late for dinner too.

Baedeker gave us that article in abundance, but nothing else; there was not even an approach to accuracy in his work. When we had walked about four miles I said to my husband—

"Do you believe in these mills?"

"No, I don't," he answered, "I believe I have counted seventy, they may be very good for cutting wood, but as finger-posts they are a dead failure."

"Do you think this road goes to Ober-Haslach at all?"

"I think this river runs into the sea in time. We shall be all right if we follow that, and then we can go home."

I did not feel cheered by this prospect.

"How far is it from Ober-Haslach to Nieder-Haslach?" I asked.

"Baedeker says three-quarters of a mile. I suppose about six and a half miles to judge from this."

"Isn't there an hotel there where we can stop?" I asked, rather in dismay, for I was very tired and ravenously hungry.

"Only a manure heap," he replied; and we walked on in silence.

The valley gradually widened as we went on. The broad meadows were green and marshy, the road was running over with water and mud. Cherry trees, stripped of their fruit, dripped dismally upon us. Not a human creature was in sight; some of the sawmills were working, but we saw no one we could ask directions from. Moreover, it would have been useless if we had, for there was but one road, so we must walk in it.

Presently we came in sight of a long straggling village, and some distance beyond it we saw a church tower.

"That is Ober-Haslach tower," said my husband; "now we are all right."

So was the village. It must have been the

happiest, most luxurious village in Alsace. Its streets were literally running with wealth, and the people don't even stoop to gather it up. Manure was before every house, under every window, piled at every corner, and little streams ran all over the street and under the doors, and ungathered-in manure wasted itself over the stones in the wantonment of superfluous wealth. The whole place was a gigantic manure heap, and the people waded about in it looking perfectly happy and content.

I should think Ober-Haslach was about a mile and a half in length, and it became a serious matter to us in our footsore condition whether Baedeker counted from the last house on the Nieder-Haslach side or from the middle of the town.

We passed a church, ugly and modern, and several little, cotton-capped, wooden-shod children holding big umbrellas over them as they went to school; but the village was very quiet. White geese appeared to be the chief inhabitants of the streets, and they and the manure had the place pretty much to themselves.

I suppose the presence of so much wealth lying at their doors has made the Ober-Haslachites careless of appearances, for this

had the poorest-looking houses and people I have seen in any Alsatian village so far.

Wet, limp, exhausted, and famished, we trudged at last into Nieder-Haslach and sought the longed-for portals of the *Goldner Apfel* with not a single lingering hope of a table d'hôte remaining in us.

CHAPTER VIII.

NIEDER-HASLACH.

THE landlord of the *Apfel* came himself to meet us when we arrived at his door. He was short, he was round, but not stout; he had a bright, shrewd eye, a beaming face, an expression of tenderest commiseration and welcome as he gazed at our dripping habiliments and our hungry faces.

With the air of a confidential prime minister conducting an esteemed foreign ambassador to the hospitalities of his country, he led us up a broad, shallow flight of stairs from the stone hall, where we had been the object of attraction of all the eyes in the establishment.

Monsieur had received us himself; he presented us to Madame, a tall, stately, black-eyed, raven-haired, magnificent woman of about forty; also to his son, an exact imitation of himself; and Mademoiselle, his daughter, a placid little girl of about ten.

This had been to inspire us with confidence in his establishment; but he made the ceremony short on account of our distressed condition, and apologised profusely for the appearance of the weekly linen on lines across the staircase. They had not expected anybody in such weather. Madame had therefore considered it convenient to, etc. etc.

We were so wet that wet linen did not matter to us; but Madame swept them off the balustrade at the top with her stately arms, and followed us into our rooms.

The first of these was a large, wainscoted sitting-room, with three white-curtained windows in it. It was bare of carpet, of course, and plainly furnished, but was a pleasant place. Opening out of it on each side were two bedrooms, both airy, pleasant, white-wainscoted, and well furnished, with walnut beds and presses, and marble washstands.

The apartments were so good that, knowing what prices private sitting-rooms usually are, we asked the terms. Two francs, we were told. I suppose if they had been fifty we should have taken them, but we liked two francs better.

Madame busied herself in getting us towels and water, and Monsieur disappeared at once to

see after some dinner for us. For the only time during our tour I felt a serious inconvenience from having only one dress and petticoat with me. My dress I had pinned up about my waist when we left the Nideck, so that was dry, but my petticoat was soaked. I was obliged to extemporise one with my little shawl; and, as the water had got into the knapsack, we had a difficulty about dry shoes and stockings.

It was rather dreadful finding that the waterproofness of our knapsack had given out. All our linen was wet and stained, but Madamè carried it off to dry; so, except for immediate use, it was all right.

We dined in what clothing we had saved dry, and it was by no means a full-dress affair. I had been foolish enough to wear cotton stockings instead of the silk ones I should have worn, so my feet were sore and blistered, and I could not bear my shoes upon them, but had to wrap them up in a pair of my husband's socks.

Monsieur served us with dinner himself, in a dignified, gravely-polite manner. His son assisted him, and never entered or left the room without a bow to us that would not have disgraced a courtly gentleman.

Monsieur was charmed with our praises of his cook, and acknowledged our remarks by a gentle, deprecatory inclination of his head, and a glance of his bright eyes. I shrewdly suspect that he had had the chief hand in providing our entertainment.

The excellent cream soup he gave us was prepared by an artist, whoever did it. It was the best soup I ever ate in my life; such a delicate compound of delicate flavour, and of exactly the right consistency and strength.

Some exquisitely-fried trout followed the soup, and then some fillets of beef, very different indeed from those we last consumed. A large tart completed the repast; it was a piece of pastry about a foot in diameter, baked on a flat dish with a turned-up edge, and filled with a kind of custard, partaking of the nature of a cheese-cake, and profusely ornamented with iced sugar in a pattern.

We had some very good white wine served with this meal, rather sour, but refreshing and pleasant. Our landlord informed us that we could drink it with safety, for he made it himself; and certainly it revived us wonderfully.

The landlord was communicative, and we were inquisitive. Of course we wanted to know

the feeling about the German occupation. The landlord's account was not satisfactory. He said that every one hated them, and spoke of them as the "träge Teytsche," which he translated "les sales Allemands," though träge in ordinary German is "lazy." It was curious to hear the tone of this expression. No Irish phrase respecting the Saxon could sound more spitish. But the grievances were not all sentimental. The taxes had been multiplied by three,—a "sacrée différence," as our friend expressed it,—soldiers were constantly billeted on the inhabitants, and the payment was ridiculously insufficient, and trade was going to ruin generally.

We asked about the war. They had not been much troubled at Nieder-Haslach. The Prussians passed through twice and stole several fowls, but were civil as far as their nature permitted.

His opinion on the war generally was strong. Bazaine was "canaille," "canaille du premier ordre," and if he had the chance he would like to put a bullet through his forehead (whereupon he tapped his own with force), and hoped his place would be found in the lowest depths of et cetera. As to Napoleon, he was "faible," and had a wife who was not "faible." The Prince

Imperial, however, was not so unsatisfactory as the rest of the family.

"But was it true," said he, "that the poor boy was assassinated?"

"He was killed by a Zulu ambush," said my husband. "It was fair fighting enough after Zulu fashion."

"But I have heard that he was killed on purpose."

"That is impossible," said my husband; "he was with English soldiers."

"I do not mean that they killed him; but it is said that it was an arranged affair by the French Republican Government."

My husband explained the story as well as he could, and let him know pretty forcibly that it would take more than the French Republic knew to arrange that with an English army, though perhaps he meant that they had bribed the Zulus.

We asked how far it was safe for him to speak his mind so plainly about the Germans, but he only smiled blandly, and said, "They know very well what we think of them."

In the evening the rain cleared a little, and we went out to look at the church.

There is a very fine early fourteenth-century

tower, with a particularly rich portal with figures in niches. The inside of the building is plain, but very finely proportioned,—a nave and choir, with aisles prolonged nearly to the east end of the choir. In the choir are good carved stalls of late work, made for the secular canons who succeeded the Benedictines who first owned the church. Along each aisle are five windows, with unusually good fourteenth-century stained glass, those on the north representing the life of St. Florent, and those on the south that of St. John the Baptist. These windows are, I think, equal to those in the south aisle of Strasburg Cathedral, which is saying a good deal. In the south choir aisle is the tomb of "Erwinus filius Erwini magistri," a sandstone slab dated 1330. This Erwinus was the architect of the church, and was killed by falling from the tower. His father "Erwinus magister" was Erwin von Steinbach, the designer of the façade of Strasburg Cathedral, and restorer of a great part of the same church. The younger Erwin appears on his tomb in a long gown or robe, and holding a mason's square in his hand. The curé, whom we met in the church, pointed out this figure, and my husband drew vigorous contradictions from him by suggesting that Erwin

was a freemason. He would not have it at any price, and considered it impossible that a freemason should build a church. My husband at last pacified him by pointing out that a modern French Republican freemason might be a different sort of being from a mediæval member of a guild of freemasons, but Erwin must certainly have been the latter.

The curé was a most polite and agreeable gentleman. My husband was particularly pleased with him, but perhaps he was influenced by the curé's asking him whether he was a Parisian (they were talking French), which was no doubt a delicate compliment. He pointed out a certain recess in one of the aisles.

"Here," said he, "I mean to erect an altar in honour of St. Ignatius Loyola."

"Why of St. Ignatius?" we asked. "Are there many Jesuits about here?"

"No, but he is greatly honoured in the district. Besides, we have had a miracle lately worked by him."

We expressed much interest in this, and so he related the story. It appears that a certain paralytic had a notion that he (or she, for we did not notice which at the time he told it) could be cured by St. Ignatius's intercession. The

curé was consulted, and a novena or nine days' devotion recommended. This was performed, and on the ninth day after receiving the Sacrament in the church of St. Florent the paralytic was absolutely cured. "There is no denying it," said the curé, enthusiastically. "All the world had seen the paralytic! all the world had seen him cured!"

There is a story told of a reply made by the late Duke of Wellington to an officer who ended a marvellous story with the words, "If I hadn't seen it myself I should not have believed it." The Duke's reply was, "*I* did not see it."

The curé displayed the treasures or curiosities of the church to us. Among them were the relics of St. Florent, the patron. They are contained in a gilt box of early workmanship, and are placed over the tomb of Richio, Bishop of Strasburg, in the choir. Richio brought them here from the church of St. Thomas at Strasburg. They are not beautiful—a heap of brown bones tied up with blue ribbons. St. Florent was an Irishman, like many of the early apostles of Germany. Why do not the Germans (or any one else indeed) return the compliment nowadays? He came as a hermit to Ober-Has-

lach, and cured a deaf and dumb son of King Dagobert, in those

"palmy days
When saints were many and sins were few,"

which was probably a long time ago. King Dagobert, as in duty bound, promoted him to the bishopric of Strasburg, where he did great things, of which the curious inquirer may read in the *Acta Sanctorum*. The shrine of him is a great place for pilgrimages, chiefly about November 7. If that is his festival the inquirer must wait a century or two for the Bollandists' life of him.

The living of Nieder-Haslach is accounted a good one. The curé receives 1500 frs. from the Government, 800 frs. from the parish, and 30 sous a day for masses, making a total of £113 : 18s. or thereabouts, from which we may learn that the Church is not a paying profession in Alsace. Besides the payment he gets his lodgings free, and I daresay receives presents of food, wine, etc., from his parishioners, who seem much attached to him. There is also an endowment left by one of the old canons for a vicaire.

After looking at the church we went out and made a few sketches. This caused great

excitement among the youthful population, who crowded round us. A sketch of the church shown to some of them was greeted with shouts of "Die kirrick, die kirrick" (Alsatian for kirche). When we offered to draw some of the crowd the delight was unbounded, and the whole population turned out and crowded the streets, till the big Prussian postman had to force his way through them to get to the post-office. I drew a fine-looking black-bearded man, who looked shy and delighted at the performance. Shrieks of enjoyment from the crowd greeted the tassel of his cap as it appeared on the paper, and his name, "Erhard Martin," passed from mouth to mouth, to his manifest discomposure.

We soon had enough of the crowd, and adjourned to the church, where a service was beginning. The service consisted of that very dull though highly popular proceeding, the Rosary. There was a large congregation, who, led by two boys in surplices, recited the Ave Maria in German over and over again till we got somewhat tired of it. Here, no doubt, is the place for moralising on the "vain repetitions" of Popish services. But first I would like to know whether they were *vain* repetitions.

They must have had a meaning for those who repeated the words, or they could never have kept it up as they did night after night—and I do not find that repetition unqualified by vanity is discountenanced. If it were so, something might be said of the six Lord's Prayers in an ordinary Sunday morning service in England. Be it as it may, if these people were not praying, and that devoutly, and with a meaning beyond the mere words, I do not know what praying may be.

The next morning we started early to go to Rosheim. Baedeker says, "Post omnibus every morning to Grendelbruch, by which visitors to Girbaden may go as far as Bildhauerhof." We meant to go as far as Bildhauerhof, so we would go to Rosheim to get the post omnibus. Practical jokes of this description are to be deprecated—but of this later.

The landlord's son, a boy of twelve, guided us to Urmatt, whence we could get a train. On the way he talked incessantly. We asked questions about the forests. They were full of game, hares, rabbits, goats, deer, and boars, but no wolves. The foresters acted as gamekeepers, and also looked out that the peasants did not

steal the wood. In the days before the Prussians came the peasants could help themselves to wood as they pleased, but that was all changed now. The foresters were chiefly Germans—in fact, Germans got all the good places. My husband remarked that that must always be the way in a conquered country, and that it was no more than the English did in India.

Mistaking the word "Inde" for "Ireland,' the boy answered indignantly, "But we are not like the Irish. The Alsatians are not murderers, and do not shoot the Germans, so we have no cause to be treated like this."

"What do you know about the Irish?" said my husband.

"I have read all about them in the newspapers," he answered. And so he had, and had his own strong views on the Irish question, and not such bad ones either for a juvenile politician. It was really curious to see what a knowledge he had of the subject, and how little he was inclined to parallel the cases of Alsace and Ireland.

We got to Urmatt after a walk of about an hour. There is nothing there but a station set in a soft quiet valley, with wooded mountains on

both sides. Farther up the valley led to the land of Pastor Oberlin, but we had no time to spend in pilgrimages, so we went in the other direction. We knew Oberlin to be the local bore of the Vosges, good man and true though he was, as all parties there do testify; so we preferred to avoid him and his, and get on to places with more than the interest of a departed hero about them.

CHAPTER IX.

A FREE CITY OF THE EMPIRE.

ROSHEIM STATION is of course a mile or two from the town, as most Alsatian stations are. We often wondered at this peculiarity, but felt it was useless to ask for an explanation, as we were confident of receiving the usual answer, "It was not so before the Prussians came," and this we felt would scarcely meet the exigencies of the case.

As we were not walking among the mountains to-day the weather was gloriously fine. We saw the mountains around Rosheim blue as heaven, with a golden girdle of grain about their feet, and longed to be on them. Had we known the weather was going to be like this we would not have come into the plains for all the old cities of the empire. However, here we were, on a hot shadeless road in a wide valley, with a tumbled mass of red roofs behind tall hop-gardens and vineyards before us. We

did not intend to be pleased with Rosheim, or even to stay in it. Baedeker had told us of an omnibus to Grendelbruch, but on inquiry we found that there was no omnibus, and, moreover, there never had been one, at least since the eleventh century. We passed a few houses beside the road, and then came upon the city gate. Instantly our desire to leave Rosheim vanished. We said:

"We are glad we have come. This is the place for us; come, let us enter it; we will stay here. We might have known that as the 'deceiver' (our once familiar friend Baedeker) said so little about it, it was worth coming to see, but we did not expect *this!*"

The gateway that so excited our admiration was a large square tower, with a broach spire and a wide arch underneath. The city walls, with old houses perched upon them or built into them, joined it on either side, and a moat ran beneath them (or did run, for it was dry now). There were two narrower side arches to the tower and a little turret under the spire; a Romanesque pattern ran round it just under the eaves, and a large, very well done fresco of the Virgin and Child was over the principal portal. The Child held a shield on which a

coat-of-arms was painted—a red rose on a white field, no doubt in unetymological allusion to the name of the city. Two lines of poplar trees lined the road, and a group of tall poplars completed the picture.

Through the wide archway, as we came up to it, we caught glimpses of an ancient street, and as we passed the shadowy portal and came out again into the sunshine it seemed as though we had stepped back into a former state of existence and found ourselves in an Alsatian city of three hundred years ago.

It was all old—there was nothing new to be seen. Had the old town been taken up and wrapped away in some storehouse hundreds of years ago, and to-day taken out and set down, it would have worn pretty much the same appearance that it did now. No incongruous new houses mingled with the old; there were no modern shop windows, no flashy brick and stucco dwellings, not even a green shutter. The brown roofs were bulged and waving with the curvature that comes with the years they had numbered. The timber-fronted houses were black with age, yet they held stoutly together, and the plaster crumbled between their posts. Upper stories of the houses hung

over the side walks, and the windows in them formed all manner of lines except straight ones. It was the quaintest, queerest, most uneven old street I ever saw.

We sauntered down it with real delight, and could scarcely keep from wondering if indeed this old place had been forgotten and left alone within its walls at peace and unmolested. It was all old together, no new pavements, no new houses, no innovations of any sort, save a few petroleum lamps slung on wires across the streets for the purpose of lighting them at nights. We could fancy the indignation of the old inhabitants at such modern institutions, and sympathised with them heartily. It was so delightful to find a place that the nineteenth century had apparently never touched with its consuming haste.

It is true that we did see the words "Kaiserliches Postamt" written up against a house, but we felt that this *must* have been "since the Prussians came," and so it could not count for anything with the orthodox inhabitants.

We had not gone very far before we saw another gate in front of us very like the former one, only, instead of having walls attached to it, a large many-windowed building joined it at

either side, and the words "Schul-Haus" were written on it. We were sorry for the moment that we had come so soon to the end of so interesting a town, but when we passed through the archway we only found ourselves to our surprise in the heart of the town itself. It was older, quainter, queerer than the outer town, and, to crown all, such a magnificent church burst upon our view that for a time we had eyes for nothing else.

Fancy a perfect eleventh-century church! a church that has not known restoration or innovation because it was completed at once and never required it. I had never seen such a thing before, neither had my husband, and we were much delighted with it. No Gothic windows had been introduced, no Renaissance façade built up, to mar its completeness. A pure specimen of Romanesque architecture it was built, and there it remained.

It was a little above the level of the street, built on a plateau of stone, with acacia trees planted round it, and their fresh bright green brought out the warm rich tint of the red sandstone building. It was a large church, with an immensely high nave and an apsed choir, with two transepts in the form of a cross; but two

aisles of a much lower elevation were also carried along the nave. It was plainly built, of course, as churches of that period were, and its beauty consisted in its proportions and the long lines of flat arches that sprang from the richer decoration under the roofs. An octagonal short tower with a low spire rose from the centre of the cross.

But the curious things about this church that gave it such a special character of its own, were the enormous and remarkable grotesques on the gables and roofs. There was something almost diabolically weird and incongruous about these fearful contortions of stone compared with the peaceful, quiet beauty of the building. They looked as though they had been placed there in frightful mockery.

On the very top of the roof of the nave was a gigantic and uncouth bird as big as an ox. It turned its back to the church, and was gazing with a clumsy magnificent contempt upon the town. At the corners were demons holding men in their grasp, and so huge that they seemed to dwarf the church. But most curious of all was the figure of a man seated on the slope of the roof where the tower joined the nave. He was cross-legged, impudent, and

leering beyond description. Stone could not be more wickedly impious than this grotesque figure; he positively made one shudder. We puzzled ourselves in wondering why such dreadful figures had been perched upon the solemn, stately church. They were as unsuited to the old building as tales of war and bloodshed would be to the sleepy, peaceful town; but when we heard the following tale of Rosheim we felt that there are more incongruous things in human nature than the gurgoyles and gaping demons upon the sanctuary of the Highest.

When Frederick the Second became emperor he pledged Rosheim, which up to that time had been a ducal village, to Frederick Duke of Lorraine until he should pay 4000 marks. From subsequent events it would appear that the Rosheimers did not approve of the change of masters, but we may be sure that their wishes were never consulted in the matter. When the duke died the emperor reclaimed his pledge, which was not at all to the liking of the duke's son, Thiébault, as we fancy it would not have been to the liking of any noble gentleman in those old fighting days. Thiébault determined to fight for the town, and for this purpose brought together an army. But

the town, which at that time was very imperfectly fortified, made no resistance; the burghers retired to the Church of St. Peter and Paul, and the victorious Thiébault entered with his army.

In high good spirits at this easy victory, and possibly with a touch of contempt for the men who had not struck a blow to defend themselves, Thiébault and his men relaxed their customary caution, and gave themselves up to the pleasure of drinking the citizens' health, or the reverse, in their own wine.

One can easily imagine the riotous soldiers and the shrinking inhabitants. The old street echoed to other sounds than the running of water and the gossip of women then. Meanwhile the burghers were in the church. The solemn spirit of the place must have given way that night to the spirit of the demons on the roofs. We imagine it was scarcely in prayer that those burghers passed the early hours of the night. Yet they may have prayed; men have done so, and that earnestly and in all seriousness too, before entering on worse deeds than freeing one's country from the grasp of a usurper. The burghers were but men, and the enemy outside were making free with their goods. In the darkness of the late night, when

the soldiers were heavy with their wine, most of them asleep, these burghers of Rosheim, headed by one Otto, "the deliverer of his country," as they called him afterwards, stole out of their sanctuary, and, falling upon the drunken soldiers, slew them every one, and so the town returned to its former master.

Perhaps it was in gratitude for this act that about this time Rosheim was made a free city of the empire, though it first appears so in a charter in the year 1323.

We went into the church; it was cool and calm and quiet. A man was praying in one of the seats. The apse is decorated with colours and gilding, skilfully done by a modern German artist, and the effect is rich and beautiful. Immense pillars with cushioned caps divide the nave from the aisles, and the windows in the nave are so high up the light seems scarcely to reach the floor. There are two altars besides the high altar in the apse,—one dedicated to the Virgin, the other to Saint Odile, a local celebrity, to whom a large convent upon the mountains is dedicated.

We rested a little while, and then went out into the bright sunshine again, pausing every moment to admire the quaint old houses. One

curious thing attracted our attention from the first. The women seemed to have a perfectly inexhaustible stock of washing on hand. We thought at first that they must be like the inhabitants of the Shetland Isles, who, as an intelligent schoolboy is said to have remarked, "gain a precarious living by washing one another's clothes." The town was admirably adapted for such a calling. Running down one side of the street was a broad rapid stream of water. This was enclosed in tanks of sandstone about ten feet long by three wide, and between each tank was a stone footway about four or five feet wide. All along each side of these tanks women knelt in little wooden boxes stuffed with straw to keep the wet out, and here they washed from early morn to late evening. The dousing and rubbing, and wringing and soaping, went on all day long, and as fast as one bundle of clean wet clothes was carried off another took its place.

The women's blue aprons and dark dresses, with here and there a striped petticoat or bright handkerchief, made the wide sunny street more picturesque than ever. There was not much laughing or talking among them; they all seemed too intent upon their work. Little

girls, with all the dignity of womanhood, knelt beside their mothers sometimes, and gravely soaped and pressed and rubbed with their tiny hands. All around there was no sound to be heard but the running of the water and the plashing of the wet linen. We stopped and looked at them often enough on our sauntering way, and they regarded us for a few moments just as curiously; but their washing was far more important to them, and they quickly resumed it, and we were left to the wondering eyes of the children alone.

They seemed to be just coming out of school as we came out of the church, and our appearance clearly gave them great gratification. Evidently strangers had not yet been imported in large quantities into Rosheim. We felt that our costumes, which were simple and ordinary enough in England, here excited remark. They were so fearfully newfangled to these cotton-caped, bed-gowned women, who looked as if they had stepped out of an old German print. In that city, where everything was old, even the children were not young. They were grave and steady and demure. As they came clattering out of school in their little sabots, not a single little boy gave a whoop or a jump; they

came into the street as steadily and quietly as Quakers from a meeting. Yet they were not unhappy; their faces were as bright and smiling as those of any English boys, and they looked infinitely more good-tempered than most English children. If they did not shout and jump, neither did they fight nor quarrel. The whole time we were in the town we never heard a child cry, or saw a squabble, or heard an angry, rough word. They were the gentlest, sunniest-tempered children I ever saw, and the babies could scarcely contain themselves with crowing.

A troop of these little personages followed us about, and formed ten deep behind me whenever I stopped to make a sketch; they had never heard of such a thing before, and their astonishment was beautiful to witness.

It was not long before we came to another gate, very like the last one, and then we learnt that these belonged to an inner system of defence, and that practically there was a town within a town. We had quite made up our minds by this time to stay here, and so looked about for an hotel. The few inhabitants whom we questioned on the subject had evidently never had the problem of strangers coming to stay in Rosheim presented to them before.

However, we found the best inn that the town possessed, and I am afraid threw the household into great confusion by our modest request for a bedroom. One was promised us in a few hours, so we deposited our baggage, and having ordered some dinner went out again into the town.

We could see to the farther end of the principal street from our inn, for we were outside the inner town, and a lovely scene it was. The irregular brown roofs, with their deep eaves, grew less and less distinct in the distance, and finally stopped against the pale green of willows that faded into the blue mountains. It was a beautiful ending for so charming a street, and we determined to go down it and see what lay beyond. The women were washing all the way as we went along, and we met a few peasants coming in from the country with long rakes over their shoulders.

A hospital with wide-opened windows was on our left as we went down, and a cemetery lay a little farther down to the left. The gate at this end of the town has unfortunately been destroyed, but the walls remain, and there is another gate about half-way round the city. As far as we could judge, the entire walls of the

city remain, and the houses are all piled up within them, as in the old times, when it was dangerous to set foot outside by reason of the wild counts and barons who swooped down from the castle-crowned mountains.

Now, outside Rosheim was as safe as inside, so we wandered out into the country roads. Just outside where the old gate stood, was a tiny chapel, so small that it would only hold three or four people. An altar was inside a railing, and curious prints of religious subjects were hung upon the walls. One represented a miracle,—a man falling out of a cart was being rescued by the interposition of the Virgin, as far as we could make out. Wreaths of flowers and leaves were also hung about. One poor woman was sitting there, resting alike in mind and body, as we peeped into the little place. It must be a good thing for the poor overworked women to have a quiet place in which to rest and pray on their way to and from their distant labours.

It was more beautiful outside, to our thinking, where the marshy flat green meadows stretched away to a dim perspective under the rows of gray willows that became misty in the sunlight. We sat on a little heap of stones by

the road and looked at the warm-tinted city, the watercourses in the meadows, and the ever-beautiful hills. On the other side of the gate were vineyards and hop gardens, but this side was low and reedy, not perhaps altogether healthy, but beautiful in summer time.

I wanted to know all about the city and its history; but my husband, to whom I looked for such information, could only tell me a few facts, for the simple reason that but little is known of Rosheim's past.

In the early days of the Holy Roman Empire, when the neighbouring mountains swarmed with free counts and barons of marauding tendencies, whose ruined castles still attest their power, Rosheim (Rudesheim, Rodesheim, or Rotsheim, as it is variously styled in old documents) was a ducal village, the property of the house of Hohenstaufen. Frederick of Hohenstaufen, Duke of Swabia, and King of the Two Sicilies, owned it before his accession to the imperial throne, and, as has been already said, raised it to the dignity of a free city of the empire. My husband could not tell me exactly what this implied, for circumstances differed in different cities; but such a city owned no superior but the emperor, who

was "immediate," as it was called, and practically enjoyed a good deal of autonomy. The ruler of such a small city was at first a count appointed by the emperor, and later a Landvogt, generally chosen from among the neighbouring nobles. This officer had for salary a certain proportion of the fines levied within the city. The actual "local government" of Rosheim was in the hands of four burgomasters and eight senators, elected by the different wards, and besides these an important officer known as the Schultheiss. The office of Schultheiss was chiefly judicial, and remained for a long period in the hands of the family of Rumel. On the extinction of this family in 1653 the emperor gave the office to the senior burgomaster, and so important was the position that the Duke de Mazarin, when appointed Landvogt, thought it worth while to claim the Schultheiss-ship also.

From the time that Rosheim became a free city, its career does not appear to have been very eventful. Skirmishes between cities, courts, and emperors, and defensive leagues and treaties with its neighbours, Ober-Ehnheim, Molsheim, Colmar, and the rest, gave variety not always pleasing. Sometimes Rosheim suffered grie-

vously. The Count of Mansfeld, in revenge for doubts expressed in painfully plain terms respecting the legitimacy of his birth, stormed the town, pillaged it, and after a complete massacre of the inhabitants set it on fire. This was the third disastrous fire from which Rosheim has suffered. The earliest mention of the town records a fire in 1132, and again in 1389 no less than eighty persons perished in the flames.

In the religious troubles of the sixteenth century Rosheim doubtless had its share. Hagenau, Colmar, and Münster declared for the reformed faith; but whatever part Rosheim took then, it has no sign of Protestantism now. It has certainly reformed itself back again.

In virtue of the peace signed at Münster in 1648, the Landvogtei, or, as the treaty calls it, La Prefecture Provinciale, of the Decapolis, or League of Ten Cities of Alsace—Hagenau, Wissenburg, Colmar, Schlettstadt, Ehnheim, Rosheim, Mulhausen, Kaysersberg, Turckheim, and Münster—was transferred to France. The transfer was not made without difficulty, and for a short time the Alsatians were not altogether good subjects of France—a fact which resulted in their being deprived of much and eventually of all of their autonomy; but they

settled down quietly after a while, and from that time till the cession of Alsace to the Germans in 1871 the Rosheimers remained Frenchmen. Frenchmen too they remain still in heart, in spite of their German language, German names, and German government. Perhaps, like the Irishman of the story, they are always "agin the government," whatever it may be, or perhaps, as is more probable, the over-governing and offensive bureaucracy of Germany contrasts badly with the politer government of France; but for whatever reason it may be, the Alsatians hate the present rule heartily, or at any rate say so. The Rosheimers say so less than most of them, for it is doubtful whether they have found out for certain that they have become German subjects again (in spite of the faculty for letting one know the fact displayed by German officials), but perhaps, like the parrot, they *think* the more.

But now, the time of wars and troubles over, Rosheim was at peace. She looked as if she had never known anything else, so quiet were her streets, so peaceful her appearance on the golden summer afternoon. We strolled back into the city under the deepening shadow of the eaves, and saw the purple shadows lying across

the street. People were coming in from the country with rakes and scythes upon their shoulders, and there was a fragrant smell of hay and wild flowers upon the air that came from great bundles of grass in little carts that were being painfully dragged over the stony streets by women and boys. To us English people it was a sad and degrading sight to see the mother of a family drawing a cart. With us it would have meant such terrible poverty to use women and children as beasts of burden. Here it may have been, for aught we could tell, a dearly-prized custom of the country, but I fear it really meant that the people were sadly poor. As we came up the street we saw a few pale streaks of blue smoke curling from a few chimneys, and a fragrant smell of supper pervaded the town. Some of the women left off washing, and blue-bloused men appeared in the streets. We had noticed the total absence of men all day, but now we saw them coming in from their work, sometimes with implements of field labour in their hands, sometimes walking beside rough carts made of poles and laden with logs from the mountains. The quiet oxen who drew the carts looked scarcely more quiet than their masters. Just before we came to our hotel we

passed a fine church built of red sandstone. It had a good classical façade, and was substantial and handsome of its sort. We could not bring ourselves to admire it as we had admired the old Romanesque church, but doubtless to many it would be very beautiful. Perched on the top of the façade was a stork's nest, the only one we saw in the town.

We went into the church and found it clean and well cared for, handsomely decorated according to eighteenth-century taste—no doubt the fashionable church of the town. There was a grotto made of stone, with pieces of artificial ivy climbing up it, in one of the aisles. Inside it was a very sentimental figure of the Virgin, and on a scroll was written that very extraordinary statement, "*Je suis l'Immaculée Conception;*" outside, a very affected figure of a child was kneeling, with a look of sentimental gushing devotion upon her face. Of course it was a representation of the grotto of Lourdes, and seemed sickly in feeling and questionable in taste.

There was a fair painting behind the altar of the martyrdom of St. Stephen, to whom the church is dedicated, and several others were on the walls. Outside the church, in a kind of

courtyard, were a large stone crucifix and a figure of the Virgin, both rather well done. There was little to interest or keep us in the church, so we came out again and began to explore the by-ways of the city. There were several curious little streets behind the church, so we went into them, and to our surprise found that they led to some rather fine houses, evidently inhabited by people in good circumstances, and with well-kept gardens. We had seen no one above the rank of a peasant in the town, and wondered to whom these large houses could belong. Probably they were inhabited by persons connected with the wine trade, as they seem the richest class in Alsatia. There were several queer nooks and corners, and quaint old houses, that were well worth seeing, in these by-streets. More than once we came across a little group of men and women chatting quietly together after the labours of the day, and through some of the open windows supper might be seen going on, or babies being put to bed.

There was an air of cheerfulness in the principal street that had not been there in the morning, for the washing being over for the day, and the men come in, there was more passing to and fro and gossip than there was in the early

day. Still there was no noise or boisterousness. Rosheimers seem to take their pleasure in almost as dreamy, sleepy a way as the old town takes its rest. Not even the German occupation seems to have moved it much. We never heard the word "Prussian," the term for hate and dislike, the whole time we were in Rosheim. In the country districts the people were enthusiastic on the subject: here they appeared indifferent. Rosheim was too old, too sleepy—perhaps too wise—to trouble itself about such matters. The women washed, the children went to school, men worked in the mountains or in the fields, the harvests were gathered, and the grapes ripened—the blue mountains looked not more peaceful and impassive than Rosheim.

We were not gratified by the sight of the oil lamps being lit, but doubtless their effect is stupendous. Certainly they were picturesque, and as everybody appeared to go to bed by ten o'clock, they were not required to be anything else in July.

We ate our dinner, a very fair one—German in manner and cooking. The nationality of the people asserts itself in their food, but long contact with France has refined them to some

extent, and the cooking all over Alsace was superior to that of Germany proper.

We went out again after dinner, and wandered about the darkening town. A gentle-faced Sister of Charity was closing the Schul-haus windows as we passed by them. From her appearance there we concluded that Rosheim was still under clerical influence. Whatever the influence was in the town, it was in favour of cleanliness. Rosheim was without exception the cleanest town we saw in Alsace. In all our wanderings we never came across a single heap of manure. Any traveller in the Vosges and Black Forest will be surprised to hear this, for the people in both these districts seem to take the same pleasure in manure as Londoners do in mignonette, and like to have it about their doors and windows. As in all other Alsatian towns, the system of drainage was capable of improvement and development, to judge from certain whiffs in by-places in the evening; but it was better, far better, in this respect than in most towns.

It was curious to see an entire town without front doors. The inhabitants at the time when these houses were built appear to have had an aversion to entering their dwellings from the street. There is a great round archway beside

each house, and that leads into a paved yard, the upper end of which is frequently occupied by stables or cowsheds, and a flight of steps at the side leads into the house. They may have had a twofold reason for building in this way. Doubtless in the old warlike times it was safer in the case of street fighting; but it is not unlikely that (as Carew says of the houses of Cornwall) it was a remnant of Roman customs, and that all houses were built round a courtyard after their fashion.

Our inn had an entrance of this sort, and at first we had experienced some difficulty in finding it, not that it was so small, for a load of hay would easily have passed in, but because we were unprepared for such an entrance. We came in as it grew dark, and asked to be shown to our room. It was rather a gorgeous apartment, much beyond our expectations. There was a polished floor, with bright mats on it, and very good walnut furniture. A bouquet of artificial orange blossoms, carefully covered with a glass shade, was on one of the tables, and this and the entrance of a servant, who quickly swept the contents of a little cupboard into her apron, inclined us to the belief that this was in reality the room of the host and hostess,

who were evidently young married people, and possessed the luxury of the only crying baby in Rosheim.

We appreciated this little attention very much, but we should have done so still more if they had taken certain hemipterous companions with them. They left so many behind that I had quite the most cheerful night I ever remember. I never was more sociably entertained, but I was not exactly in the humour for it; I would rather have gone to sleep, but that was impossible. The only good I got from my wakefulness is the being able to record that the Rosheimers—at least some of them—go about very early in the morning in slow wooden carts that jolt over the stones, and that somebody rings the bell of the Church of St. Stephen at two o'clock in the morning in a peculiarly exasperating manner. I don't think it was worth the trouble I took to get at these facts. I could have invented them if I had wanted them badly.

My advice to tourists is always to take insect powder or snuff with them when they go to bed. A friendly Christian (he was the one Englishman we met) told me he used snuff, and you could hear them sneezing all night. I had not

any snuff; I don't take it; so I could not tell if this was the case. If so, it is interesting.

The next morning was as bright and sunny as possible. The mountains, with the deep blue shadows passing over them, were more bewitching than ever. We could resist them no longer; charming as Rosheim was, the mountains were to us more beautiful still. We had ordered a carriage the night before, for there was no omnibus in the city and never had been, and while it was getting ready we amused ourselves by looking out of our bedroom windows upon the street below.

A sort of open-air market was being held a little way down the street, and women were passing by every moment with their purchases. They were chiefly vegetables, fruit, and eggs, for this was a fast-day. The younger women were all bareheaded, with neatly plaited hair; the elder ones wore close-fitting white caps. They were all clean and decent, and most of them wore large blue aprons over their dark dresses. The little children were going to school, their yellow heads shining in the sun. They went by in little groups of twos and threes, carrying their slates, and looked smiling and happy. Several women had begun the everlasting washing again,

and the splashing and flopping of linen was going on under my window.

Presently I saw the postman come out from under the archway of the inner town. A pretty girl, with brown plaited hair and a neat dress, was coming from her marketing with her basket on her arm. He called to her as he came behind her, and his call sent the red rushing over her face. She tried very hard to look as if the letter he gave her was of no consequence to her, and I need not say failed signally in the effort, for she could not restrain a little eager movement to open it. But suddenly becoming aware of the publicity of her surroundings she blushed redder than ever, and walked hurriedly on with the letter in her hand, trying her best not to look in a hurry, or too delighted.

This little story acted itself before my eyes in such a very quiet manner that perhaps nobody else noticed it at all, for nobody else was idle. It was so obvious what it was all about that I watched the pretty blushing girl as long as I could see her with a real interest in her letter. I hope it fulfilled all the delicious anticipations that the blush had heralded.

The carriage with the tinkling bells drove up,

and we had to get into it and leave Rosheim. We were very sorry to do it, but the blue mountains were before us at the end of the gabled street, and we could not resist them. We meant to sleep that night at the top of the holy mountain of St. Odile in the convent hotel kept by the Sisters of St. Francis, so dreamy Rosheim must be left behind, and we drove down the sunny street towards the mountains.

CHAPTER X.

ROSHEIM TO GIRBADEN AND ST. ODILE.

Our road, after we left Rosheim, led along the valley to the west, through fertile meadows and under cherry and chestnut trees. It soon began to ascend, and the scenery became wilder. We passed grove after grove of chestnut saplings, grown for the tremendously long hop poles we had seen outside the city. The mountains rose very gradually here, and gave us plenty of time to enjoy the view of red Rosheim, with its towered gates among its green fields and gardens.

As we went on we passed from chestnut groves to fir groves, and then a turn of the road hid Rosheim valley from us and brought us among uncultivated forests. As may be seen on the map, the road goes round the shoulder of a great hill, and so we had view after view of lovely wooded valleys. Some had fertile grass fields at their bottoms, with streams running

through them, with the often-seen sawmills busily grinding the forest trees to logs. A lovely blue that was neither mist nor cloud, but a transparency of colour, hung over the forest sides, and filled the distant valleys with a tenderness of colour I have never seen in any other country. Ferns and strawberries grew beside our path; along the warm banks in the valleys the quantity of fruit was great. As usual, we thought it would be a pity to stop and gather some, for we should doubtless find plenty on the Girbaden mountain.

We passed at intervals along our road four stone crosses set beside the path. By diligent questioning of the very stupidest boy I ever met, who was unfortunately our driver, we elicited the fact that they were erected to commemorate the spot where a murder had taken place. Four murders along as many miles of road seemed a good allowance even for Alsace. We discovered afterwards that our informant had said murders where he should have said deaths. It was the one intellectual effort that he was capable of, this exaggeration of horrors; it plainly exhausted him, and for the remainder of the day he had great difficulty in keeping either himself or his horse awake.

We wound down the side of the mountain we had crossed, and then along a winding sunny valley, where the grass was as green as green could be, the pine woods of the deepest blue upon the hills, the river of the clearest, and the whole scene most beautiful.

A big mountain rose on the opposite side of the valley, its lower part, contrary to the custom of most Alsatian mountains, was heathery and bare of trees. From down below we could not see the immense castle which crowned its topmost height, but this was Girbaden.

There was a good path up the mountain, as there is to most places of interest in Alsace, but carriages were not allowed by the owner of the place to go there, so we sent our carriage round by the valley to meet us at Laubenhain, on the other side, and then began our ascent.

It was a most delightful day, the sky blue, with soft white clouds floating lazily upon it, and sending their blue shadows upon the mountains and hills in a manner that gave an added charm to the bright sunshine. The side of the mountain was covered with ling, and a profusion of wild flowers, bushes of mountain-ash with its bright berries, brambles, and bilberry bushes.

Never anywhere in one place have we seen such an astonishing number of varieties of butterflies. The purple emperor was quite common there. Fritillaries passed us without number, also white admirals, brimstones, clouded yellows, large tortoise-shells, peacocks, marbled whites, two or three specimens of the "Camberwell Beauty," besides commoner blues, whites, and browns, burnet moths, huge dragonflies, and unknown insects.

So far I was disappointed in one thing—there were no strawberries; but as we got higher up we came into a belt of forest, and there, under the shadow of the pines, I found several crimson, not scarlet, with ripeness, and most delicious in flavour.

But we had little time, as my husband, with masculine contempt for fruit, expressed it in Cornish phrase, to "waste on wild trade," for we had a long day's work before us. Leaving the trees we came upon a steep grassy slope, and just opposite us, as we came out of the shade, was a very clever bronze cast of a wild boar on a pedestal. A most ferocious beast he looked truly: I could not echo my husband's wish that we should meet one in the flesh. This graven image contented me quite well.

A little higher up this slope is the forester's house, the usual whitewashed dwelling, with a few gay flowers outside it, and dogs, pigs, and poultry very much at home all round it. On a stable door opposite it were nailed several deceased specimens of hawks, one a beautiful bird of great size.

We asked the way to the castle, and were directed up a broad pathway through a low chestnut wood. At present the pathway was filled to the depth of about two feet with hay, which an old man and a girl were turning to dry in the sun. Walking was rather difficult, for the path in the best of times was full of ruts; and, now these were covered with the hay, one occasionally had a good chance of spraining an ankle.

There was no view, for the chestnuts grew too thick to see between them; but as we came higher up a few breaks occurred in them, and we caught glimpses of a panorama of wooded valleys and mountains.

We had gone quite round the mountain from our starting-point in the valley before we reached the castle gate. This entrance is decidedly complicated in construction, and seems, when perfect, to have been admirably

calculated for keeping out intruders of all sorts. This elaborate defence forms merely one small corner of the great pile of buildings which once stood here. The gateway by which we entered led to a broad grass-grown plateau like the one outside, and seemed a sort of outer defence. Another set of walls was inside this, and yet another, before the castle itself was reached; all clearly traceable, though the middle one is much overgrown with bushwood, and all so placed as to command the whole space between the gates.

Above the inner wall, on a great pile of red sandstone rocks, stands what is now the most conspicuous part of the castle. Two immense doorways seem to have existed in the lower part, but they are now choked with rubbish. A winding pathway between the walls led us at last into a great inner courtyard, and presently we stood in what was once a magnificent banqueting hall. Though most of them have been broken away, a few of the clustered pillars still remain beside one of the windows.

Outside this hall bases of great pillars at regular intervals stand among the brambles and elder bushes; part of one of them is even now standing, but the rest are a heap of ruins. It

may have been a chapel, or a grand entrance to the great hall: there is little left to show what it was.

One of the courtyards was several acres in extent. It was difficult to realise the great size the castle must have been, for it is said to have had within its wall fourteen courtyards, and fourteen gates led out of the castle. It was by far the grandest ruin we had seen, and the lovely views from it all over the adjoining country were neglected by us for some time.

In the largest courtyard there is now a little whitewashed chapel dedicated to St. Valentine. It is built beside the ruins of the great western tower, and is said to be much frequented by pilgrims; but nobody was there now except ourselves, and we, being married, were beyond the saint's jurisdiction, so we took but a slight interest in it, and wandered about the ruins instead.

From this mountain top the whole of this part of Alsace is visible. Girbaden stands all by itself, and is not linked on to any other mountain. It has the finest possible situation for a stronghold, and every approach to it can be seen from the top. The castle is said to have been built in the thirteenth century, and it was one of the most important fortresses in a

well-fortified country. It is curious to find how little is known of all these places. Their strength seems to have been solely used against each other. Any one of our insignificant little English castles seems to have done more to be remembered in the world than the largest of these giant fortresses.

We passed the forester's house again, and instead of turning aside into the wood at the bottom of the grass slope, took a straight path down the eastern side of the mountain. It took us beside a field of oats at first, and then into a deep fir wood. I had my hands full of flowers by this time, chiefly purple and yellow blossoms. Here, as elsewhere in this red sandstone district, I had been struck by the prevailing blue and purple tints of most of the flowers. A few common yellow flowers grew among them, but nearly all the blossoms were lilac. What we call Canterbury bells were the most abundant, of every shade of palest lilac to deep purple, and from the size of small hare-bells growing in clusters to single flowers on a stalk as big round as half-a-crown.

The path down the forest was very steep and rocky; the red earth was scantily covered by mosses and little clumps of fern; tiny streams

trickled among the jutting stones. When we came out of the wood we found ourselves among cottages and fields on the slope of the mountain. Our way led down a little lane, with stone hedges on each side, the first hedges I had seen in the country. It was more of a watercourse than a path, to judge from the rocky nature of its ground.

Not being certain where to go we had asked our way at a cottage, and after much knocking and calling induced a woman to look out of an upstairs window. She was the only living creature in the place apparently. I suppose the whole population had gone out to work.

We noticed the nice vegetable gardens that each cottage possessed. A large space was invariably given to the small-leaved tender lettuces that appear dressed with oil and vinegar at every dinner and supper. No lettuce grown in England can compare with them for their crisp tenderness and delicate flavour. There were always onions, cabbages, potatoes, and many other vegetables, and generally some currant and gooseberry bushes as well. The gardens were neatly kept, and a few flowers were generally planted near the houses.

Garden culture seemed to us better under-

stood than field. The crops for the most part were thin, though, to judge by forests and wayside flowers, the soil must have been rich. Doubtless the poverty of the small proprietors accounts for this, as they can afford no machines of any sort, nor sufficient manure to produce good crops. All the labour is hand labour, and that in connection with what seemed to us a very poor sort of implement, a kind of hoe which turns up only a small clod of earth at a good deal of expenditure of force. But their great-great-hundredth-grandfathers doubtless used this tool—possibly their antediluvian ancestors invented it—and the Alsatian would sooner starve than do better than his forefathers. What is the use of a man's having ancestors if he is going to know more than they did?

So the women—for the women do the field work—peck at the rich earth with their little hoes, and work hard and toil all their lives, and get about a quarter as much from the land as an English farmer with a good landlord gets from his; and when the peasant dies he leaves his land to his children, and each one of them gets just enough for him to starve on, and to give him sufficient excuse for never trying to better himself in any way. In

all Alsace I never saw a working woman with a smile on her face, or who was not wrinkled ten years before her prime, or a man who did not look as if the wolf of hunger was never more than one spring from him. In this, of course, I am speaking only of the peasantry. Only once did I ever see a child play. They have no time to do so, poor little things; they work in the vineyards and fields when our children are learning their letters. They are patient and good beyond belief, but woefully unchildlike.

At the bottom of the lane we found our carriage outside a little roadside public-house. There were a few cottages, but no people visible.

We went into this little inn of Laubenhain, where we found our boy and despatched him for the horse, and, being tired and thirsty after our walk, ordered a bottle of wine.

The landlord, who brought it to us, was a young man, a peasant apparently. We went into a small room with some wooden benches and tables in it, and a few wildly-coloured religious prints on the wall.

As we drank our wine I noticed a little group at the end of the room, consisting of the landlord and two women. They were having their dinner. A coarse earthenware bowl was

on the table before them full of sliced potatoes and some vegetables—I should think turnip and cabbage; a smaller bowl held the salad of lettuce, oil, and vinegar. Each of the three held a steel fork; there were no plates, but every one took what he or she fancied from the bowls and conveyed it to their lips. A jug of milk stood by the women, and another jug, containing I do not know what, by the man. They all ate in perfect silence, and eyed us with a certain shy curiosity.

Our wine was a little sour, but strengthening and very pleasant. We felt quite revived by it, and continued our journey feeling decidedly better for it. We had, unfortunately, not provided ourselves with any lunch, for we had calculated upon getting to the Odilienberg much earlier than we now saw we should do.

Our drive lay for some time between fields and orchards—a pleasant, pretty country. Then we passed through a lovely birch wood, where the slender tassels fluttered in the breeze, and the ground was deep with ferns. Oak woods and beech woods followed; there was little distant scenery, but the woods were most beautiful.

We passed over a ridge of hill, and then looked down into one of the loveliest valleys in this land of valleys. It was narrow and

winding; the steep hills were thickly wooded; a river ran through it; and a little town lay at its broadest part. It was a pleasant, prosperous, clean little place, not larger than a village, but possessing some nice houses with lovely gardens, clearly the abode of refined and well-to-do people. A large factory was beside one of them. We learnt that sword blades were the speciality of Klingenthal. It looked as though nothing so murderous had ever been present in its bowery prettiness.

Our road lay down this valley, under the overhanging boughs of a beech and pine wood. The river ran among the grassy fields to our right. Before us was a stretch of shadowy mountains at the end of the valley. The sun was shining hotly,—our boy and horse had both constitutional objections to going quickly. We had a comfortable carriage; we felt as luxurious and dreamily delighted as possible.

A mile or two up from the village was a large sawmill; piles of logs were before its doors; and great stacks of the more worthless parts used for firewood were all neatly arranged and labelled in a space on the other side of the road. Here we saw a rift in the mountains on our left; it was filled with pines, and steep mountain-

sides closed it in on either side; a path led along the side of the gorge, and along this we were to go; so we left the lovely bright Klingenthal, and began our uphill path again. The road was fortunately a very good one; had it been otherwise, we should have been starved on the way. Boy and horse both slept at intervals of five minutes. He was a perfectly language-proof boy—no mere words had the slightest effect upon him. Possibly he did not understand them; but I don't think any flower of speech, even if he had understood it, would have roused him into activity.

If we had had some lunch we should not have minded this slow rate of progression in the least; as it was, we did not mind it very much. On our right rose what looked like a really primeval fir forest. Trees grew there whose height I should be afraid to guess at, for it might look ridiculous to English readers. I will only say they were very, very tall and straight,—that their trunks were covered with moss and lichens that must have been there for ages. Great blocks of stone were tumbled about among them; sometimes the trees grew up from a mass of rocks, their great roots climbing over them to the soft earth below.

The ground was red with their fallen needles, and one looked up a dim perspective of trunks. In other places the ground was covered with ferns—lady-ferns, male-ferns, and basket-ferns; and great bushes, with bright green leaves and brilliant scarlet berries, shone like fire in the sombre shades.

On our left-hand side the road was bordered in many places by these attractive shrubs. I have never seen them anywhere else, and do not know any name for them. Their berries are about the size of red currants, and they grow in thick clusters like bunches of grapes, and are of a most beautiful scarlet. The bush grows not unlike an American currant bush, and hundreds of these bunches of scarlet berries are over it. It was one of the most beautiful shrubs I have ever seen: I wonder it is not cultivated in English gardens: I have never seen it there. There was a deep descent to the ravine, down which a mountain torrent tumbled. We could see it among the fir trees sometimes; ferns grew in profusion by it. We were above the tops of the trees in the ravine most of the way, but towards the upper end of the valley the ground fell less precipitously, and then the forest crept up to the roadside.

In many places we passed spots where the woodcutters had been at work. Now and then we saw a slide made after the fashion of a "corduroy" path for the passage of logs down the mountain-side. Some of the tree trunks we saw lying down were of enormous girth; such planks must come from them as I have never seen in England. Not a single man was at work in the woods as we passed by them, neither did we meet any one upon the road. The most complete silence reigned everywhere. Not a bird's voice was heard—only a few flies and gnats followed us as we crawled along.

It looked a fine place for wild boars; my husband kept up a sharp look-out, and so did I, peering into the depths of the forest beneath us, and glancing up the long vistas of pine trunks in the forest above us, but not a glimpse of one did we see. We learnt afterwards that we might have spared ourselves the trouble of looking, for they never appear near roads or in frequented places.

We found that this valley is a *cul de sac*, and that we were to cross it at the end, and proceed up the mountain to our left. The winding road gave us several very beautiful views of the gorge we had come up; and as

we went higher and higher by a pretty rapid ascent, the view became most lovely over a great stretch of mountain country.

We left the thick forests shortly, and drove along a ling-covered hill, with bilberry bushes and the beautiful red berries in profusion everywhere. Just here, too, I saw a red berry growing on a low-growing plant, something like a bilberry as to leaf; its bright scarlet fruit was very pretty among the black berries of the other plants. Masses of stone jutted out from the hillside, and once our road lay between two huge blocks of sandstone as big as a good-sized house, their crevices filled with ferns and grasses. An immense wall crowned this spur of the hill to our right. My husband said it was the "Heidenmauer," a wall that encircled the entire mountain, six to ten feet in height, and six feet and a half thick, and supposed to be Roman, or even Gaulish.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ODILIENBERG.

We drove under a large archway, and found ourselves in the Convent of St. Odile. The outer court thereof seemed chiefly to contain stables and lime trees, the latter very large and old, and the former not too clean. We were directed to another archway in a wall, and then entered the actual conventual buildings.

The mountain of St. Odile has been an important place for many centuries. There are signs of Celtic and Roman occupation, the latter consisting of a huge rampart, locally known as the Heathen Wall (the Romans were perhaps heathens when they built it, though that is by no means certain, as the date is unknown); the former, far more vague, being chiefly doubtful cromlechs and so-called Druids' caves. The Vandals destroyed the Roman fortress in 407—at least so says a little guide-book sold at the

convent; but for this once the Vandals must have forgotten their vandalism, as there is Heathen Wall enough left after their destruction to keep out any well-conducted barbarians. Duke Adalric of Alsace—one of a species of dukes more like those of Edom than of England—took up his quarters on this mountain, and his daughter, Ottilie or Odile, founded the monastery which still bears her name. Saint though she was, she had not the gift of prophecy sufficiently developed to found in the eighth century the hotel-keeping convent of the Third Order of St. Francis which now occupies her holy hill, so she had to put up with Benedictines, who, by some process unknown, seem to have eventually become Canonesses Regular of the Order of St. Augustine. And the rest of the acts of St. Odile, and all that she did, and her blindness which she suffered, and how she recovered therefrom, and the other religious foundations which she founded, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of the Saints by Joannes Bollandus and others? And for a certain other event of her life, not mentioned by the Bollandists, the inquirer may consult the collected poetical works of the Rev. R. H. Barham, better known as Thomas Ingoldsby.

The monastery flourished in a poor sort of way for some centuries. Its reputation was great, but its luck was bad. The fire tried St. Odile's work too much, and the abbey was "presqu' entièrement consumé" eight times, till the canonesses gave it up in despair, and begged to be transformed into Premonstratensian Canons, thinking no doubt that they were safe under such a gorgeous name. But the men of the Order of St. Norbert were no better off than the ladies of St. Austin, and the White Canons were burnt out as often as the Black Canonesses.

"Arriva enfin l'époque du grand bouleversement social en France," and, in spite of their big name, the Premonstratensians were turned out, and until 1853, when Mgr. Ræss, Bishop of Strasburg, acquired the property for his diocese, the mountain was secularised.

We left ourselves standing in the inner court of the convent when we began this historical digression. There was only one door to be seen, so we rang the bell and were admitted by a sister into a long corridor which seemed to be used as a scullery. The sister was a little old woman, with a cheerful shrewd face, and was very deaf. She wore a black gown and veil,

the latter edged with blue, and a large white collar and close white cap. We followed her along the corridor, a bare whitewashed place, to where other nuns were peeling potatoes and washing dishes. A great many visitors—tourists or pilgrims—were walking about, talking and laughing.

Our deaf friend spoke French moderately. We prefer that language to German, as we know it better. We asked for food and lodging.

"Are you Catholics?" was the first question.

"Here is intolerance!" thought we. "If we say no, or explain that we are members of the Church of England, and leave it to them to settle whether that is Catholic or not, we shall be sent down the hill again!" But we wronged the good nuns. My husband, without a moment's hesitation, answered in the affirmative, and we found that the question was only preliminary to the statement that it was Friday, and therefore we could have no meat.

"Mais nous sommes bonâ-fide voyageurs," remonstrated my husband. "We are more than five miles from home," he added, evidently mixing up the Licensing Act and the canons of the Church; "also we are in the German

empire, and there are privileges attached to that."

"But it would not do. We could only have the privilege of fasting, which, the Prophet Ezekiel notwithstanding, seemed to us worse than eating upon the mountains. However, the maigre soup was excellent, and so was the omelette, to say nothing of the salad and the cheese.

"Would they have given us meat if we had said we were not of their Church?" said I, as we sat at table.

"I trow not," said my husband. "Besides, I wasn't going down that hill again to-night for the Pope, the Pretender, and the other Person all in one. I only hope they will remember it in the bill."

We were to lodge for the night in a cell. My husband tried to say something about the fast-day being "sell" enough for one night, but he could not work it to come out right in French. Our cell faced the courtyard, and we could not get one facing the other way, as the convent was very full. This was a pity, for the view is magnificent.

After having become less hungry by means of omelettes, etc., we went out to explore the

mountain. I found a point a little way down the road by which we had come, from which to sketch the view. It was very beautiful. I wish I could have reproduced the lovely colours of the landscape before me. The distant hills were of the softest palest blue, that deepened almost into indigo in the pine forests or the nearer mountains. The bare slope of the Odilienberg was purple and gold with ling and fern and gorse, and variegated with great gray rocks. The cool bracing air added to the delight of the scene, and made one understand that the advantages to be derived from the pilgrimage might well be physical as well as spiritual. "*Anima* sana in corpore sano" would be the result of this delightful journey to the devout pilgrim.

Meanwhile my husband went off to look at the antiquities of the hill. Finger-posts through the wood directed him to the Mennelstein, the Druiden Monument, and other attractions, and a genuine cromlech in this part of the world was not to be resisted. He made for that at once, but came back sceptical and disgusted.

"That 'Druiden Monument' may do for Germans," said he, "but they should know better than to palm off that sort of swindle on

a Cornishman. Those rocks have been in that position ever since the glacial period, and there are the ice marks on them now. If the Druids made that they made the glaciers too, and St. Odile herself shall not make me believe that." But the Mennelstein satisfied him better, and he must needs come back and take me there to see it. We went up a great slope covered with dwarf pines and bilberries till we reached the Heidenmauer, which surrounds the whole hill. We climbed on to the top of this—easy enough from the inside but almost impossible from outside, even now that the Roman garrison is not there to add to the difficulty—and scrambled along the top of it for some way. After a while we left it for a path through the wood, and at last came to a huge mass of rock surmounted by a landmark of whatever the Germans have instead of an Ordnance Survey. Two soldiers were conducting some surveying operations at the top of the rock. We clambered up and joined them, and then a sight burst upon our view. At our feet lay the plain of Alsace. It seems to be always lying at our feet in these parts, but it was more so than usual here, for the precipice seemed to go straight down for a mile or two, and the plain to begin

somewhere under it. This was an optical delusion, for we walked down that precipice the next day, and found a little system of young mountains and valleys before we got to any plain at all. Also the actual height of the Mennelstein is only 2673 feet above the level of the sea, and the plain of Alsace is not on that level. "In clear weather the Mennelstein commands a view embracing almost the whole of Alsace, the Breisgau, the Black Forest, the general system of the Vosges, the Rhine (though not *all* of it), and some of the Alps." Thus much one gets from Baedeker; but he does not do it justice, nor can I. I have seen larger views in Switzerland, but never any, I think, more striking or more interesting. The innumerable towns and villages, with their red roofs; the stretches of pine forests and undulating hills; the winding Rhine; the ruined castles, whose name was legion (at least that was not exactly their name, for they each had names of their own, but at any rate they were many); the church spires, not the least among which was the glorious cathedral spire of Strasburg; but it would take one all day to catalogue the view from the Mennelstein in all its manifold interest of nature and humanity.

We came down from our exalted post and got back to the convent just in time for what would have been dinner if it had not been a fast-day. I always thought that fasts were over by six o'clock,—they always are in the best-regulated Ritualistic families that I have ever met with,—but it was not so at St. Odile's. Maigre soup, eggs, omelettes, salads and cheese —good of their sort, but food on which one did not appear to "get any forrarder"—again formed our meal. A French lady and gentleman, name unknown, sat next to us and entered into conversation. They were not uninteresting examples of respectable middle-class French people,—Catholics, but not violent clericals, moderately republican in politics, agreeable and polite in manners. They were originally from Saarbruck, but had "opted" for French nationality, and had gone to Nancy. We talked of French politics, at least my husband and monsieur did so, while madame and I listened. The Frenchman's views were temperate and sensible. He considered that the great want of France was something serious in the way of government, and not the general playing the fool with the whole business that was at present the fashion. "Ils sont comme les écoliers qui

ont perdu leur maître," said he, of the present rulers of France. As for his own views he envied the settled hereditary constitutional monarchy of England, though as regards France he was a republican, by reason of the impracticability of restoring any sort of monarchy there. I do not know how far these views represent those of the steady-going respectable Frenchmen. Somehow throughout all his talk he never seemed able to suggest improvements, though it was something to be able to see that the present state of things was wrong. However, he gave us the impression that, as in America, so in France, the game of politics was becoming disreputable, and that honest-minded men were gradually withdrawing themselves from public affairs and ceasing to take any interest, not of course in the welfare of their country, but in party politics. Anything but blessed are the people who are in such a case, and it is to be hoped that he was mistaken, yet the last two or three years or more must have been very grievous to truly patriotic Frenchmen. As our friend said, "France is drifting heaven knows where, and the end will be some fearful catastrophe." Perhaps he was too much of a pessimist. I do not pretend to know.

After our meal we walked round the outside of the convent with the French couple. The view from the garden is not unlike that from the Mennelstein, except that the latter place cut off the view of the Vosges to the south-west. A pavilion has been constructed on a sort of terrace on the very edge of the precipice, and there one may make oneself comfortable and enjoy the prospect. Close to this is the little Chapel of the Angels, a Romanesque building situated on the extreme edge of the rock. A narrow path goes round it, to which is attached the legend that any girl who can walk nine times the whole way round will be married before the year is over. Some amount of nerve may be needed to perform this feat, though it is easier than to sit in St. Michael's Chair on another holy mount that I wot of; but then the blessings to be gained there are greater. It was on the site of this chapel that the angels appeared to St. Odile. It is not recorded that she walked nine times round it. If she did, the guardian spirit was off duty that day, for she died a maid. Near this is another chapel, known as the Chapelle des Larmes. St. Odile, praying before the altar of this chapel for the soul of her dying father,

shed tears of so corrosive a nature that they bored a hole in the rock. They told us this at the chapel; and as they showed us the hole it must be true, otherwise we should not have believed it. However, we afterwards read it "on a prent book," so that settles the matter.

The walk round the rock below the convent is curious and interesting. The buildings seem to spring out of the solid sandstone, and the wild shapes into which the rock has broken are very striking. The Frenchman pointed out to us with great delight a large ivy plant whose stem was just a metre across, but my husband capped this by telling him of the ivy on the north wall of Richborough Castle, which he had measured and found to be three metres across. "Ah, but this was planted by St. Odile herself," said the Frenchman. "The ivy at Rutupiæ was planted by Julius Cæsar," returned my husband, which, no doubt, was quite as true as the Frenchman's statement, and as easy to prove. As a matter of fact my husband had let him down easily about the size of the plant, which was really eleven feet, but, as he said afterwards, three metres was all he thought the Frenchman could bear, or his own French arithmetic run to.

At the gate of the convent we stopped to read the rules of the establishment, which were printed in French and German, and fastened up to the wall. They are rather characteristic, and worth transcribing. We had only time in the fading light to make notes of some of them, though the last and most striking is given verbatim.

1. All persons who wish to pass the night at St. Odile must enter their names and descriptions in a register.

2. In the "belle saison" dinner is served at 12.30.

3. Guests who pass a considerable time on the mountain can be served in a private room.

4. If a large party wishes to come, notice must be given beforehand.

5. Persons who wish to stay a long time can secure rooms in advance.

6. On Sundays and festivals strangers cannot be served during the time of divine service, as all the people of the house should be present at mass and sermon.

7. No meat is served on the days of abstinence prescribed by the Church.

8. Visitors are requested not to make a

noise, sing, or call out in the convent, and not to smoke in the corridors. [Not strictly observed.]

9. Visitors must not write their names on the gates, walls, etc.

10. The gates are closed at 9 P.M. Those who wish to stay out longer must mention it to the Director.

11. At 10 P.M. silence reigns in all the house.

12. A priest is attached to the convent for the spiritual needs of pilgrims.

13. A "surveillante" is specially charged with keeping order. All complaints must be addressed to her.

14. On account of the pious associations of the place, visitors are requested to behave decently.

15. There are three kinds of visitors—first, pilgrims who come for the health of their souls; secondly, invalids and others who come for the health of their bodies. There is a third class of visitors—happily very rare—those who know not how to behave themselves and who are not accustomed to respect anything. To these we say, "Vous n'êtes pas ici à votre place."

This last rule, or rather statement, looks as though an Alsatian variety of "'Arry" was not altogether unknown. Certainly it is to be hoped that the nuns are right in their estimation of the rarity of the species.



CHAPTER XII.

RAPPOLTSWEILER AND BEBELNHEIM.

We were sorry to leave the beautiful Odilienberg the next morning, with its fresh air and fine views, the courteous nuns, and the old convent; but we had promised to be at Bebelnheim on Sunday afternoon, so we had to press on.

The path to Barr led through the woods of the Odilienberg, past great mossy stones and under spreading oaks, for some distance, getting lower and lower as it wound round the long side of the mountain. We had a fine view of the convent and the wooded eminence as we reached the end of the opposite Bloss mountain, on which the Mennelstein stands, and saw the Odilienberg's green sides rising straight up from the level golden plain. We had a last good look at its hoary stones and white convent walls out of which the trees seemed to spring, as we turned the corner, and went aside to see the

ruins of the castle of Landsperg, a thirteenth-century building, but now in a very ruinous state. "We had to get the key at a forester's house, and it was, I think, the dirtiest and foulest-smelling dwelling I ever went near; some children playing on the steps were positively repulsive from the incrustation that was on them,—yet there were no signs of poverty about the place.

The ruins were on the extremity of this long spur of hills, and commanded a beautiful view of a wooded valley, and many ranges of forest-covered hills on which several ruins of castles stood. Ruined castles were becoming monotonous in this country, and we were rapidly getting as indifferent to them as a Turkish husband must be to kisses: he can have too many of them.

"It is not worth while staying here long," said my husband, as we clambered round the ruins; "this is nothing to the Hohen-Königsburg." So we returned the key, and pursued our walk, getting lower and lower, and passing through pine woods until we came out upon the side of a hill covered with low chestnuts and beeches. A sandy path led down it and brought us into a road, and a very dry and dusty road

it became, as it went through vineyards and fields. We were now on the lower foot-hills of the Vosges, the best wine-growing districts in the country. The vineyards may be beautiful when the grapes are ripe and the autumn colours are on the leaves, but just now they were green and stiff and monotonous.

Some seats were placed on the last slope before the descent into the plain itself, and there we rested and looked over the roofs of Barr, that lay almost beneath our feet. It looked a crumpled-up little town from here, for the high roofs were packed as closely as possible together, and there were no suburbs or outskirts or straggling houses, as are seen in English towns.

We counted an enormous number of villages from the plateau on which we sat—thirty, I think,—each one with its church spire and red roofs all huddled together, and not so much as a single house standing by itself in the whole district. The country about here is very thickly populated, for these villages are large and not more than a mile or two apart, and every bit of ground is cultivated and parcelled out into tiny strips.

Barr itself was not particularly interesting, except from a marketing point of view, for a

market was being held in the streets. Stalls with boots and shoes, glass beads, cheese, soap, knives, and all sorts of haberdashery, were in great numbers. One square seemed devoted to the sale of crockery ware, chiefly of great black and yellow and green jugs, of rather good shape and colour, and apparently of home manufacture. Vegetables lay in great bunches all along the side walks.

We found a clean hotel, where we were served with the usual German table d'hôte, and after that went to the station. Here we found our French friends of the Odilienberg, and travelled with them until we came to Schlettstadt, where every one was turned out of the train into the usual busy waiting-rooms and exposed platform.

Soon after leaving Barr we had seen the object of our long-cherished desires perched on a hill before us. The Hohen-Königsburg in all its ancient glory stood proudly on a spur of the long mountain range on our left. Yet, strange to say, we did not rejoice at the sight. I believe we very nearly hated our French friends for pointing it out to us; we would have been grateful, deeply grateful, if we had passed it without seeing it,—if we had been suffered to

sink into a state of oblivion and been able to abuse the railway for carrying us past it. As it was, we were obliged to look at it, and to think of the many weary weary miles we should have to climb up that stiff mountain-side, and the still wearier descent.

Baedeker, our once trusted friend, but our late perfidious foe, we turned to with the desperation of old acquaintance. Baedeker said nothing about an hotel near the castle: our friends did. Our weariness, and the dilapidated state the hot air of the plains and the scorching sun had brought us to, made it quite impossible to walk up and down the mountain. We gave in, and meekly purchased tickets for Rappoltsweiler (or Ribeauvillé), and left the Hohen-Königsburg to get on as best it could without us.

Coming from the pure bracing air of the Odilienberg the plains seemed suffocating; we had scarcely strength to clamber into our train when it came up; there was not a breath of air, only streaming pitiless sunshine; I believe if we had tried the walk to Hohen-Königsburg we should have dropped by the way.

The station of Rappoltsweiler is about two miles from the town, but a steam tramway meets the trains. The town itself is of the

closely-packed red-roofed Alsatian style, and contains many very curious old timbered houses. We found a clean comfortable hotel in the principal square, and when the evening drew on were sufficiently cool and rested to go out for a stroll. At heart we were very heavy about the Hohen-Königsburg, but it was too late now: we could not spare another day to go there, and we had to content ourselves with looking at the three castles of the Counts of Rappoltstein that stood on a mountain just over the town. This is what Baedeker says:—

"The *Count of Rappoltstein* was the 'king' of all the musicians and minstrels of the upper Rhine, who recognised him as the head of their brotherhood, and paid him a yearly tax, while he in return extended to them the benefit of his protection. Every year, on the 8th of September (which is still the date of a local feast), these wanderers assembled at Rappoltsweiler (afterwards at Bischweiler) to celebrate a joyous festival, called the 'Pfeifertag,' and to settle all their disputes. On the death of the last Count of Rappoltstein in 1673, this singular jurisdiction, along with the title of 'King of the pipers,' was conferred on the *Counts-Palatine of Birkenfeld* (afterwards *Zweibrücken-Birkenfeld*),

who were in the service of France, and was retained by them until they were deprived of it by the French Revolution. Max Joseph, Duke of Pfalz-Zweibrücken, a colonel in the French service (1777), and afterwards King of Bavaria (d. 1825), resided in the chateau (now a school) down to 1782."

The chateau was a long many-windowed uninteresting building, but not far from it was a curious old gateway with a square tower, a remnant of the inner fortifications of the city, and still in good preservation. The old wall of the outer city is still standing in many places, and was built in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A broad stream runs down the centre of one of the principal streets at the upper end of the town, and is afterwards divided into smaller streamlets. Presumably this stream flowed in the same place in the fourteenth century, and, if it did, it had certainly been collecting smells all that time, and stowing them under one particular bridge. In all my life I never smelt anything so fearfully foul as that water was there, and the children of Rappoltsweiler were dabbling and playing about in it, and enjoying the odour of their ancestors.

Being Saturday afternoon the women and girls were all scrubbing the round stones of the streets (there are no pavements) with mops and brooms, and dashing the water from the stream over them; but they never touch the liquid themselves; it would spoil their complexions if they did.

We tried to walk up a fearfully stony path between vineyards to the three castles, but we never reached them; the air of the plains had rendered us as limp as a home-washed shirt collar. We could only sit down and rest, and look at the red roofs of the town and the leafy mountains.

Rappoltsweiler is in a valley that runs up from the plain between the mountains, and a little beyond the town are some large cotton factories. Cotton spinning and printing are the chief industries of Alsace, and were formerly sources of great wealth and prosperity to the inhabitants; but of this later on.

We noticed here, as in Rosheim, the complete absence of all smoke in the town until after sunset, when the men came in from the woods, and the women from the mills. A sense of supper stole up the hill to us in the curling blue smoke after the sun went down, so we went down too and sought our inn.

The next morning was a hopelessly wet one, and the population of the town appeared to have been changed in the night.

Yesterday all the people were ragged, dirty, and barefooted. To-day they were all well dressed, well clad, and had washed their faces. All the shops were closed (except a stationer's and confectioner's), and there was a regular English "Sunday at home" aspect about everything, with, however, one exception,—there were no lounging men at the street corners: we supposed when we went out and noticed their absence that they were not up yet, but behold we found them where they were least to be expected, —in church.

We went to the parish church, where the third mass for the day was going on, and although we were tolerably early we could only just get places. By the time the service was well under way there was scarcely even standing room to be had, and the place must have held at least 2000 people. The town itself contains about 6000 inhabitants, and there was another service going on at a nunnery church in the town at the same time.

The women sat on one side of the church and the men on the other; all were very quiet

and devout, the women reading out of German devotional books a good deal.

A very gorgeous beadle, with a halberd and pike, a cocked hat, and unlimited silver lace, stood in the centre of the nave the whole service through, except when he conducted the priest to the pulpit. The service began with the usual asperges; then the priest ascended the pulpit and gave out a hymn in German, which was sung heartily, the congregation all kneeling. A very energetically-delivered sermon on the desirability of leading a sober, virtuous, and godly life followed, and was attentively listened to.

Among the men snuff-boxes were freely handed about, and it was evidently considered the polite thing to press them upon a stranger, and I rather feared for the results with my husband, who is not in the habit of using the gentle stimulant.

The epistle and gospel for the day were read in German from the pulpit, also German prayers, and a blessing. Then the priest went to the altar and began the mass. He wore a dark green velvet chasuble with a silver cross upon it, and four little acolytes in red cassocks and white short surplices served. There was no

deacon or sub-deacon, but two priests sat in the choir.

The music was of a semi-Gregorian kind, and the choir and the priest went on quite independently of each other. For instance, the choir began the Gloria with him, and then dived into an immense gulf of organ recital, and came up farther on when the priest had left the creed behind him, which they immediately seized upon and confined their attention to, so that the priest had got to the "Sursum Corda" by the time they had done.

It would have been confusing to any one not pretty well up in the Roman service; but the choir liked it, and the people liked it, for they sang lustily, and we don't know that the priest didn't like it, so it was all right.

After service I went down the principal street of the town to sketch an old window I had observed the day before (see vignette). It was still raining, so it had to be done under an umbrella, but that did not in the least prevent a large concourse of the inhabitants closing up for a look at the performance. It was ludicrous to observe their astonishment when they looked up and noticed that there was a window opposite; they had clearly never observed it

before. We asked some children if they knew what the Latin words meant, and they read them and translated them at once.

At dinner there was a large party assembled. Among them and opposite to us was a member of the French Red Ribbon Army, whose name is Legion (of Honour). He was an engineer by trade, it appeared, and had earned the right to the little rosette by some special excellence in his work. His talk was military. The bombardment of Alexandria was his chief subject, and herein we found ourselves in a dilemma. This event had only just happened, and as we had not seen a paper since leaving England, for all we knew to the contrary the G. O. man might have blundered into war with our decorated friend's country by this time; therefore we were puzzled between the duty of supporting our own country, right or wrong, and that of disapproving of anything that Mr. Gladstone might see fit to do. Had we been in England our choice might have been different, but in a foreign land our course was clear, and we declared for once for the Liberal policy. There ensued a lively argument in consequence, which was conducted, however, with the greatest possible politeness on both sides, and with the

greatest care to avoid abuse of one another's fatherland. French politics were avoided a good deal, for our friend was of somewhat advanced opinions and a politician in the American sense of the word, so that one could get no real information from him.

After dinner we went to the station in an omnibus, and while waiting for the steam tram were enlivened by an enthusiastic procession of members of a gymnasium (whether a "Turn-verein" or a school we could not make out), who, in white holland suits, and preceded by a band, marched up to the tram. They had come to greet some fellow-gymnasts; and if these had been heroes returning from Afghanistan there would have been far less fuss. In fact, the greeting nearly equalled that of the Egypt conquerors in London.

We were met at Bebelnheim station by an old friend of my husband's, who lived in the village, and who drove to the station in a char-à-banc to meet us. With true Alsatian hospitality she pressed her house and all it contained upon us directly she heard we were in the country, and, apart from the great pleasure of seeing her, we were delighted to have this opportunity of seeing the real indoor life of the better class in

Alsace, which we could otherwise never have had.

Bebelnheim, or Beblenheim, as our friend carefully called it,—for she was French in all her sympathies, and felt towards Prussians and things of Prussia as only an Alsatian can, —was a large straggling untidy village, with the usual supply of excellent manure in the streets, and a rather larger average of rags and dirt and wine shops than in most villages hereabouts. There were two places of worship, a Catholic church and a Protestant one, for the people just round here are bi-religious as well as bi-lingual.

This should indeed be a garden of delight to many of our good friends in England, who have made "peasant proprietorship" and the abolition of "landlordism" their one ideal of perfect happiness in this life. Here every man has his piece of land, and when he dies he leaves it in little bits to his children, unless, that is, he has mortgaged it for drink until it is worth less to the inheritors than a right of way to a debtor's prison. These people never emigrate; they do not leave —scarcely even marry out of—the villages they were born in, but go on year after year dividing up their strips of land, until there are now about three times as many hands employed upon the

land as are necessary. This being the case, of course work is not plentiful, nor wages good. No machinery is introduced, nor improvements made, for no proprietor can do more than get a bare living out of his strip. In bad seasons he cannot do that, but gets into debt, from which in all probability he never emerges; and in good years, when his vines yield well, he has a very fine big drink.

Drink, it seems, is a good deal of a curse in these villages. It seems odd that people should like to get drunk on vinegar, but they do; and getting drunk is not quite such a healthful pastime for them now as it was "before the Prussians came," for whereas they used to drink the genuine juice of the grape, sour though it was, they now drink what professes to be grape juice, but is in reality potato spirit.

We were assured by our friend, who is well acquainted with the people and the country, that in all probability, except perhaps at Nieder-Haslach, we had never yet tasted the juice of the Alsatian grape. Certainly the clear canary-coloured delicately-flavoured wine she gave us, the product of their own vineyard, was wonderfully different from the cloudy vinegar we had been regaled upon at hotels.

I was very curious about vineyards; it seemed a grand thing to grow your own wine; so our friend took us into her father's cellars, full of immense casks, and explained the whole process to us, also the aggravation of being called up in the middle of the night by Prussian officials to have these casks tested. It seems the Prussians have these little ways of endearing themselves to the native population.

The house in which our friend lived with her father was a genuine old Alsatian house, with a big archway leading into a courtyard, and the house behind it. In all these villages the entrance to the house is carefully concealed inside a yard, and a great archway with heavy wooden doors leads on to the street. They are present witnesses of the old fighting days of Alsace.

We were introduced to our friend's father, a white-haired courteous old man of the days before the Prussians. There was a slight difficulty in holding much conversation with him, unfortunately, for he only spoke Alsatian, as all the old people do. French and German are only spoken by the younger members of a household, and under Prussian rule the French language will soon be extinct in Alsace, as even the child-

ren in French-speaking districts are compelled to learn all their lessons in German, and French is forbidden to be taught or spoken in the schools as heretofore. We were anxious to learn whether the people were really as poor as they appeared to be. There was very little real poverty we were told, though under the pressure of the enormous taxes—four times what they used to be under French rule—they were getting poorer and poorer every year. The cotton manufactories had kept Alsace wealthy for many years. The finest kinds of cotton dress fabrics were made there and sent to Paris. Since the annexation the heavy duties prevented their exportation, and the Germans would not buy Alsatian goods; consequently the factories were almost at a standstill, and wealth no longer poured into the valleys. Great expenses have been incurred by the country in building fine cut granite residences for the Prussian officials, who make a fortune in a few years out of the people. All the good appointments are of course given to Prussians. Alsace, which was free from debt in 1870, has now a debt of over £1,000,000. These were melancholy details, and the look of the country bore them out. Alsace was going to ruin, the people

were unhappy, and the land and industries were undeveloped and sinking back instead of going forward.

We went out for a walk in the village after dinner. There was a crowd of people in an open space among the houses to witness the performances of a gipsy juggler and his family. One poor baby of about four sobbed and cried most pitifully as he climbed with trembling feet and hands up a ladder that was perched on his father's breast.

They were a hard-featured ugly crowd that witnessed the performance, and sparing of their coppers when the hat went round; I did not see even a passably good-looking face among them. The evening was drizzling and cold, so we soon went in again, preferring conversation indoors to dark dirty streets outside.

We asked about the religion of the people. Bebelnheim was Protestant, we were told, though there were a few Catholics in it. Our friend, although a Lutheran herself, gave but a sorry description of the pastors of that sect. She and her father, for instance, though two of the principal inhabitants, rarely if ever received a visit from their pastor. As for the poor, the pastors did not go among them at all, unless

there was a christening or a wedding, and then they generally ate and drank too much. They were married men and poorly paid, which may be some excuse for their love of meat and wine; but the neglect of their flocks could not be so excused, and Bebelnheim was no exception to the rule, our friend assured us. They have a bad reputation everywhere.

On the other hand, we were surprised to learn from her that the Catholic priests were universally respected for the sobriety of their lives and their devotion to the poor. It was a strong statement for her to make, for she was a staunch Protestant; but she made it, and farther said, that in the Protestant villages the men were chiefly unbelievers. We ourselves had seen what the men were in a Catholic town that morning in Rappoltsweiler.

"Surely," we said, "the eternal bore, Pastor Oberlin, had raised Protestantism in Alsace."

"In his district," she replied, "it may be so. Here it is as I tell you; the pastors are drunkards and worldly, the priests respected and good livers."

The next morning we were obliged to leave our hospitable friend. I really believe our visit was as great a pleasure to her as to us. An

intellectual accomplished woman, with the command of several languages, and a keen interest in literature and politics, could scarcely live in a more uncongenial place than an Alsatian village. Not only had she not one single person to talk to who cared for any of these things, but her very books and newspapers were stopped at the post-offices and examined, and passages that might be construed to hurt the feelings of the Prussian Government cut out wholesale. It must be unsatisfactory to have a newspaper with the leading articles cut out. Our revelations of the outer world were as much enjoyed by her as her descriptions of Alsatian life were by us. We parted from her with many regrets at Kienzheim, a village some miles from Bebelnheim, whither she had walked with us on our way.

We had come by a broad flat road, through large dirty villages and green vineyards, the whole way. A thunder-cloud had obscured the sun, or it would have been very hot on the treeless road. We were quite on the edge of the plain, and the mountains upon our left were growing purple under the shadow of the clouds. The weather was threatening, but we determined to push on, and just about one o'clock

arrived in Kaysersberg, the end of our walk. It was a queer picturesque little town, with numerous quaint fifteenth and sixteenth century houses. I noticed a pillar that looked some hundreds of years older still. Many of the houses are timbered. I had just time to make a sketch of a lovely old house and the ruins of Kaysersberg Castle above. This building, which we were sorry not to have time to visit, was the residence of the imperial Landvogt of Alsace during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and was destroyed during the Thirty Years' War. We had seen so many castles (and had *not* seen the Hohen-Königsburg) that we regretted seeing these ruins less on the whole than not wandering longer about the town. There is said to be a very good sixteenth-century German altar-piece in the church, also a fine fifteenth-century Lamentation for Christ in stone. The church was originally twelfth century, but has been altered, though the Romanesque portal yet remains.

There was a kind of fair going on in the streets, and booths and cakes and ribbons were everywhere to be seen, though perhaps the principal commodity for sale at fairs here are carpet shoes and very thick boots.

We had found a cheerful clean hotel, with acacia trees and oleanders in front, where we had a good dinner and a very polite host, who took places for us in the post cart that went to Orbey, the nearest point we could drive to Lac Blanc, where we intended to pass the night.

Being as usual the only passengers besides the post-boy and an empty mail bag, and thereby getting the coupé seat behind the driver, we had a good view and a comfortable place the whole way. These post carriages, which are generally a very ramshackly sort of lumbering diligence in a country not addicted to tourists, are a great convenience, for, provided one wishes to go where they go, they answer the purpose of a private carriage at one-fifth the expense.

The Weiss, which is a turbulent tumbling river, is crossed by an old bridge at the western end of the town, and the road winds along a flat valley, with precipitous rocks on the left hand side.

At a corner of the road we saw to our astonishment some brightly-coloured figures on the rocks high above our heads. They proved to be huge wooden figures representing the 'Agony in the Garden;' they must seem fearfully realistic to the peasants coming into the town in the dusk of the early morning, with

the mountain mists giving a semblance of moving life to the agonised figures. Crosses by the wayside abounded; also crucifixes, some with garlands of pine and acacia round them, or bunches of wild flowers at their feet—chapels for the poor, where the sittings are all free and bonnets not required.

Speaking for myself only, I do not think I like this custom. Pain and suffering come upon me with a shock in the midst of sunshine and beauty, and the pleasure of travelling from one beautiful place to another. Possibly the toil-worn women that I pass trudging along the roads with burdens on their backs or pale children beside them, find in the pain and sorrow of their best Friend a solace and a comfort for their own troubles. I suppose it must be so, seeing that it is the poor who care for these crucifixes, and it is only the poor that one ever sees kneeling beside them.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LAC BLANC.

As our jingling bell-caparisoned horses trotted along the smooth level road beside the foaming river and among the green fields, we gradually came upon a new state of things. We had become so used to dilapidated houses, dirty children, streets running in manure, dirt, untidiness, and wretchedness, in Alsace, that we could scarcely believe at the end of an hour's drive that we were in the same country. Here were little thatched-roofed villages with whole houses in them; clean windows with frilled white curtains behind them; clean streets—flowers before the cottage doors; neatly-dressed women and children—the women with dainty white caps upon their heads; cultivated fields and neat stone fences. Everywhere there were tidiness, cleanliness, and comfort. It was like coming into another land. The general features of the country were as different as the people. The

villages were no longer a jumble of red roofs tightly packed into foul-smelling streets; most of the cottages stood in their own gardens and fields, and were dotted all over the hillsides like Cornish or Swiss villages. Granite peeped out from the hillsides instead of sandstone, and the fields and road were edged with moorstones set on edge or piled together, with ferns and wild flowers growing in their crevices.

Here we saw, too, what was a great want in the sandstone districts, numberless streams of delightfully clear water trickling down the hills, and winding among the fields everywhere. The perfect clearness of a stream in a granite country is remarkable, and these little streams abounded. The flowers, too, had changed. In the sandstone part the prevailing tints of the flowers were purples and lilacs: scarcely any other colour was to be seen. Here, yellow and white flowers mingled with the gray stone, and later on we saw tracts of yellow and white and purple pansies growing on the hillsides.

There was less wood about here and more open space; the whole country, though fully as picturesque, looked freer and brighter. We passed through several villages, the largest being Schnierlach, which lay up a valley to our left, so

the post cart went there and back. It was a large village, as clean and bright as possible; there were cotton factories, and several good houses and a church. The population all about here is Roman Catholic and French-speaking. Indeed, we were a very few miles now from the French frontier, the road from Schnierlach ascending circuitously to the "Col du Bonhomme" (3084 feet), which is part of the boundary of Alsace.

The omnibus came down the hilly road into the valley again, and we went on to Urbeis, or Orbey, a large scattered village, rendered conspicuous by a large new church in its midst. The women were mostly sitting at the doors of their houses sewing and knitting, with their babies around them; this is the first time I have seen any woman in Alsace doing woman's work (except washing in the streets); everywhere else they occupied the position of an English donkey, and were either pulling carts or carrying huge bundles of hay and garden produce or faggots.

The post cart went no farther than this, and we had agreed to walk to the Lac Blanc, a small lake lying in a hollow of the mountains far above our heads, and close by a long narrow

ridge called the "Hautes Chaumes," and the present boundary between France and Germany.

We were rather tired for such a long uphill walk, but no carriage could pass up there, so we were obliged to walk.

The road at first lay up a steep lane rather like a Devonshire lane, only with a bright mountain stream rushing down one side of it, and glimpses of lovely views at the corners of hills and valleys like the foot-hills of Switzerland.

The country was well populated, though after leaving Orbey we saw no regular village,—only scattered homesteads with fields and fruit trees around them, and lovely flowers at their doors. Flower gardens had been rare in Alsace before. The road was a steep and stony one. Presently we passed a schoolhouse where the children, all coarsely but comfortably clad and shod, were coming out. Not one child had bare feet. Several of these little scholars were going our way, and tramped along in a little crowd behind us, evidently much interested in our appearance.

As we went on they dropped off by degrees, going up little rocky paths to their various homes, until only three little boys remained.

We opened up conversation with them; they were French-speaking, and very polite in their answers. They showed us their lesson books, all in German, and confessed they found their lessons very difficult, as they had to learn the language as well as the lesson. I regret to say that when they parted from us they asked us for sous, wherefore we gave them less than we had intended.

The country gradually became wilder and less inhabited. A great ridge of granite mountain partly hung with clouds was visible before us, and these clouds spread towards us in a manner highly undesirable in a mountain-side towards evening. We began to be rather anxious whether we should find our hotel, or wander about the mountains all night. But the beautiful view of the valleys and hills beneath us, with their cornfields and cottages, the lovely flowers beside us, the bright streams, and the delicious freshness of the air, made us glad we had come, no matter what was to happen in the future.

When we had left Bebelnheim that morning we had been limp, weary, melancholy beings. We had travelled all day, and walked many miles since then, and were feeling as strong and

cheerful and well as possible, and it was simply the effect of the splendid mountain air.

There was, however, one important matter, born of this air, that could not be overlooked—we were getting very hungry. There was plenty of cold water but nothing else to be had in an eatable state, for the beef was all walking about with bells round its necks, and there was no other animal within sight, except down, down, down below our feet in the valleys.

We pushed on. The clouds came down upon us in a thick drizzle. We could not have seen the Lac Blanc if it had come to meet us; all our glorious mountain view of purple ridges and glowing sky was shut out from us. We could do nothing but follow a rough track among the deep coarse grass and heather; and if there had only been one track, we could have done, but of course there were a good many made by the cattle. Fortunately we came across a herdsman, and he directed us rightly, so before we had got very wet we saw the ugly white walls of the Lac Blanc Hotel.

It might just as well have been in Lincoln's Inn for all we could see of its surroundings, and the accommodation inside was certainly not sumptuous.

We were shown into the usual small room, with bare walls, two windows, two short pine beds, two mats, two diminutive jugs and basins, two towels, and one looking-glass.

The windows had not been opened since the house was built, and when they were opened let in more stable odour than air. In the one room downstairs (excepting a sort of hall, where the people of the house and servants sat) the case was worse: the cold and smells that came in were only equalled by the damp and smell within. It showed an immense amount of cleverness on the landlord's part to preserve all those fine smells in the midst of so much wild mountain air; I can't think how he did it.

We had a very good little dinner served to us, however, so perhaps we ought not to complain of the smells. It was very well cooked and very moderately charged for, considering the distance everything has to be brought up the rough paths, and the uncertainty of visitors.

The mist had closed in with the darkness so thickly that there was nothing to be done but to go to bed and hope for a fine day for the morrow, when we had set our hearts upon walking along the Hautes Chaumes, and getting

to the Schlucht, where there were fine views and a good hotel.

Morning came, gray and lowering, but not absolutely wet. It was a great disappointment to us that it was not bright, for we had looked forward to this walk more than to any other part of our tour. We should be over 3000 feet up the whole way, and on the left side should see the whole Vosges system, with the plain of Alsace, the Black Forest, and, if in good luck, the distant Alps. On the right we should see the French Vosges and as far as Nancy. Everything depended on the weather, and the weather did not seem inclined to favour us.

Before starting, which we did by nine, I made a little sketch of the Lac Blanc (or Weisse See) from our windows, and a few straggling streaks of sunshine came out and cheered our spirits.

The Lac Blanc, so called from a rim of white quartz that goes all round its edges, is a small greenish lake, with high precipices on two sides of it, and a rocky slope on the other. The hotel stands on this slope, and fir trees grow at its base. It is a pretty wild little place, not a human dwelling save the hotel in sight, nor any living creature on the rocks and slope.

The Hautes Chaumes pass along one side of it, and beyond a high-peaked ridge jutting out from the Hautes Chaumes lies another lake, the Lac Noir (or Schwarze See), about half the size of the former lake, but we had not time to go and see it.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FRONTIER OF FRANCE AND GERMANY.

THE Reisberg (3310 feet), which is the highest point of the ridge above the Lac Blanc, is reached by a winding pathway up a stony slope covered with low-growing bushes, coarse grass, and wild marigolds; a few stunted pines are scattered at intervals over it, and a fine view of the still green lake, with its white shores and dark precipices, is to be had all the way.

We were in the highest possible spirits at this the acme of our journey; the gray clouds looked higher up than they had done, and let fitful gleams of sunlight down upon the valleys and hills. The splendid air made us feel as bright and strong as possible, and we expected to reach the Schlucht by dinner-time.

We met two priests coming down the path; they had come over from France probably that morning. In a very short time we were in

France too, for less than an hour's walk brought us to the summit of the ridge, and there we found a pathway formed by cutting up the boggy turf for a couple of feet wide, and on the right side of it were the small white boundary stones.

Of course we sat on a stone with one foot in each land promptly, and my husband walked in Germany while I conversed with him from France. It was a great satisfaction to my feelings to see a real frontier at last. It looks like a very dirty boggy path, and but for its associations would have no value in this life, for it is not fit to walk upon, being one half bog, and the other half bog and water.

The Germans—I can't imagine for what reason, save to show possession—have dug up their side of the land a good deal, but the French have left their grass and moss undisturbed, so we walked in France from choice, as it was cleaner. Just at first there was very little view, for the ridge was broad; but as soon as we came to the highest part of the Reisberg the view was simply magnificent.

On the German side there was the long line of forest mountains we had come along, and the Southern Vosges down about Gebweiler;

beyond lay the valley of the Rhine in its golden splendour shining in the sun ; beyond it the dim Black Forest mountains. The Alps we could not see, and they are rarely seen save in the autumn, I believe. On the French side was a vast range of blue wooded mountains and yellow valleys, and beyond them smaller hills and plains away to St. Dié. It was the finest view we had ever seen, and every fresh step brought new beauties before us.

The ridge on which we were at this part ended in a steep precipice on the German side, down which we could look at little green lakes lying far below, and valley after valley beyond. On the French side it sloped gradually down towards pine woods and lower hills; the grass was coarse, and the ground boggy, but marigolds and several flowers that were strange to me were growing in it.

Presently we went right along the very edge of a huge precipice, and lying far below was the beautiful Münster Thal, a wide fertile valley, with houses and churches ; we were so close to the edge that the effect of looking straight down was very curious. An old man was cutting hay on some slopes near here, and was the only living being we met upon our walk. A little

lake lay deep down in a hollow, and was as green and calm as a bit of sunset sky.

Baedeker here tells his trusting followers to turn to the right and cross the crest of a hill near a large turf cutting and boundary stone 2778. We obeyed him of course, and with the usual disastrous result. We got among bogs, we lost any semblance of a path, we went a mile or two out of our way, we lost all the view on the German side, and took a considerably longer time to arrive at a certain little beech wood than if we had followed the frontier stones according to our instincts.

When at last we got to this little wood of stunted beeches it began to rain, and we stayed a little time under the thick branches for shelter. It was only a shower, so we moved on ; but there was a good deal of wind on these heights, and to walk against a strong breeze requires some exertion.

This little beech wood was the scene of another ramble of ours. The Vosges Club had nailed up some little boards on some of the trees pointing towards tracks, and with the words, "Lac Vert," Le Thannet," etc., upon them. Under the impression that these boards would direct us to the places indicated, we

obeyed the finger-sign on them, and wandered about in a bog until we came to the conclusion that practical jokes with fingerposts were about the poorest sort of jokes ever invented.

By the aid of boundary stones and Baedeker, who for once was right, we did get to see the Lac Vert, and well it deserves its name. It lay a long way below us in a hollow of precipices, and with a belt of dark pines round its unruffled bosom. The detour from our path was not great, but we found a very big hill to go up just beyond us—such a big hill that we faltered at the foot of it, and weakly decided to go round it instead of up it.

Going round a hill is rather like going round the truth; you never can tell what lies on the other side of it. It was almost incredible that a hill could spread so much as this one did; it basely left off being a hill after a time, and simply laid itself out in most objectionable rough wild country, strewn thickly over with enormous blocks of granite, which we had to scramble up and down, and were betrayed into awful lurking-places of furze and brambles. The entire country became composed of the flat of this hill; we could see nothing but this wild land about us, for the

thick rain came down and shut out all view of distant mountains.

We passed another death-stone on this desolate country, the only object of life we met, and that, I suppose, had been a murder,—not a cheerful episode. The rain poured, the wind blew, there was no sign of a path or a boundary stone; we were horribly hungry, and could not see any view. We got on the top of another hill at last, and with fervent gratitude welcomed the white boundary stones visible to us in the distance. Never again until we were safely housed in the Schlucht hotel would we lose sight of those comforters. Baedeker and the Vosges Club were like unto Egypt, which is as a staff upon which if a man lean, etc. We acknowledged but one guide, philosopher, and friend for the rest of our walk—the frontier.

Presently the rain cleared; we could see a rift of sunshine over the distant western mountains, then a golden light in a valley of cornfields, fleckered shadows upon wooded hills of moving clouds, light and shadow passing and repassing, then a rolling away of vapour and showing of blue overhead. The scene was so beautiful and varied that, in spite of wet clothing, we could not regret the rain—at least while the

interval of sunshine lasted; but when the clouds closed over again and the torrents came down upon us, we changed our minds.

We walked on and on; there was no sign of an hotel or any building: but for the faithful boundary stones we should have believed that we had missed it, for the distance, even allowing for our detours, considerably exceeded the one given by Baedeker. Hereafter, when we talked of this walk of ours, we never could get two people to agree as to the distance: some said it was four hours, some three and a half, one (but he was a guide) six. Baedeker makes it six miles, which every one agreed was altogether wrong. Combining the information we received from the best authorities, we concluded it was about nine or ten miles. We took three hours and ten minutes, with three-quarters of an hour's rest besides, and we walked fast during the greater part of the time, and we always find that we outwalk Baedeker's times, so in this instance he is clearly wrong in his estimate.

We had been gradually descending for some little time, and presently entered a low pine wood, wherein were several beautiful cows, most of them with bells round their necks. A steep pathway brought us to our much-desired hotel.

The Schlucht hotel is a building after the Swiss toy style, with wooden balconies and marvellous pierced barge boards in the roof. There were so many carriages in the yard we despaired of rooms; but we did get one, and a very nice one, with a wonderful view from its windows. We were very wet of course, most of our garments being perfectly soaked. However, we managed to make ourselves presentable to the eye of man, and went downstairs in a short time to dinner.

There were a great many people at the table d'hôte, all of whom had driven over from Münster or from Gérardmer, the one fashionable watering-place in the Vosges. The dining-room was a pleasant room, with long windows and a balcony, and was civilised in its furniture and means. The dinner, too, was a good one, and the guests more or less amusing.

After dinner, as the rain had cleared, though the sky remained cloudy, we went out for a stroll. The situation of the hotel is very picturesque. It lies on a sort of ridge thrown across a deep ravine from the Hautes Chaumes to the Hoheneck (4480 feet), and straight down from its balconies a tumbled mass of giant boulders and dense pine forests seem inextricably mixed

until they fade away into a distant valley. It almost seems as if one could drop a stone from the balcony down this lovely precipice to the valleys below.

To the left side rises a wild rocky hill, with trees curiously and picturesquely dotted about its sides, and that merge into a dense forest lower down. Along the side of this mountain is cut the carriage road to Münster, and a wonderfully good road it is. We walked along it a little way; it is broad and level, and bounded at the dangerous corners by a low stone wall. We sat on this wall and looked down, down into a perfect wilderness of green. Gigantic pines grew there, with ferns about their feet, and we could see down upon their ancient heads until they were lost in the distance. Beautiful red berries like those we had seen on the Odilienberg were here in profusion, and foxgloves three feet high, and numberless tiny flowers among the rocks.

The road passes through a tunnel at the corner of this mountain, and the view of distant mountains seen through the dark arch was very beautiful. We purposed the next day walking up the Hoheneck to see the magnificent view from there, but this depended upon the weather.

It was certainly cold here; the wind was high, and towards night the rain and fog came up and obscured everything. Our only refuge was supper and bed.

We were very much amused at supper by the conduct of a young lady in a green "Newmarket" coat, apparently a bride, who unfortunately did not belong to the Blue Ribbon Army. She talked, she laughed, she chaffed the waiter, she coquetted with her husband, she glared defiantly at me, whose harmless presence she seemed particularly to object to, — possibly because I was the only other woman present, — bit savagely at her bread, found fault with the wine, — but drank plenty of it, — made faces and caresses at her much-enduring husband, and altogether made a complete nuisance of herself. We were heartily glad when, in a fit of supreme contempt, she rose from the table and disdainfully left us. There was only one other person present, for the visitors had all gone — a Würtemburg gentleman of quiet manners and pleasant ways, and we enjoyed a talk with him in quiet afterwards. He and my husband agreed, from certain indications we had noted, that the musical profession had the honour of claiming our late companions.

There was an intelligent waiter also, with whom we had some conversation, and who informed us that this was delightful weather for the smugglers, as the police do not watch the roads in bad weather.

"What do the people smuggle?" we asked.

Wine and cigars, we were told. Many even of the tourists who drove up to the Schlucht filled their pockets with cigars to carry back into France. The hotel stands just on the German side of the boundary stones. All the wine drunk in Münster, they told us, was smuggled from France; and probably what we drank in the hotel was also of French growth, but we discreetly refrained from asking such an inconvenient question; anyhow it was more like French Burgundy than Alsatian vinegar.



CHAPTER XV.

GÉRARDMER AND THE COL DE BRAMONT.

Oh how cold it was when we got up the next morning! and a fog like a gray blanket wrapped us in. We could not seė a yard from the hotel; it was a most pitiless and unrelenting fog, and damp and cold into the bargain.

We made a dismal breakfast in the great empty dining-room. Our German friend had taken to newspapers of a few weeks ago with a philosophy that was truly appalling in its severe calmness. The defiant little woman of the night, before looked rather haggard this morning, and was warming her feet at the stove. Presently she came to the breakfast-table and appeared to resent my eating my roll and butter, for she flung her bread savagely about, glared at me, tossed off some brandy with a swaggering air, and then, defying the weather and all its ills, strapped on a small knapsack and flung herself out of the house. She was the most

defiant little person I ever saw, and I fancy her rather quiet husband must have a hard time of it.

As I was working up some of my hasty sketches a party of French people came in. A little gray, well-shaved man, a large, motherly-looking woman, a bony lady with a pug dog and a virgin aspect, and a tall military-looking man with two very nice boys of about fourteen.

They begged permission to look at my sketches, which were drying their Indian ink on the table, and we struck up an acquaintance. They were very pleasant and polite, and we sat together at dinner and talked;—how they talked! It ended in their offering us a seat in their waggonette back to Gérardmer. There was no prospect of the fog clearing, so we gladly accepted the offer, and with true French economy Monsieur, the little gray man, who it appeared was the owner of the ladies, explained to us that we should not have to pay for our seats, as the driver had been engaged by the drive, but we might give a pourboire to the driver.

It was very funny the business-like way in which this was done; no Englishman would have thought of the delightful compromise that

was thus effected. We quite gravely expressed our obligation, etc., of course, as if we had been doing this kind of thing from our infancy, and after a great bustle about waterproofs and shawls by Madame and Mademoiselle we at last started.

The lower down we got the clearer the air became, so that before long we could plainly see the beautiful forests on either hand and the towering rocky heights above. On the whole, I think these were the most beautiful woods we saw anywhere. The trees were an immense height—I am really afraid to say how high; but no trees in England look much more than shrubs after them. The pines were straight as arrows, and the most lovely ferns clustered round their feet, and foxgloves in imitation of their height held their purple heads above the fronds. Bushes of scarlet berries lined the roads—beech and birch and oaks varied the greenery of the forest; it was a perfect dream of verdure.

Presently, as we came to the foot of a hill, the carriage stopped, and we all got out and went to see a tiny lake that lay among the forests, and a beautiful waterfall that dashed away from it down a rocky ravine. Following

this stream we came into a wood the like of which I had only seen in Gustave Doré's illustrations, and never expected to see in the flesh, or rather in the green. The branches of the great pine trees were covered with the moss of ages; it hung down in great lines like stalactites from a cavern, or spread a broad thick cushion right along a bough. These long trails must have been over a foot in length, and they were on every tree, and the ground beneath was one thick carpet of the softest moss as well. The torrent ran down the ravine, and the white waters, the weird, moss-laden trees, the pure green of the light, and the drifting fog high up in the tree-tops, made a fairy-like scene.

We had not long to stay there, and were soon on our journey again. The road continued very beautiful, for it wound through forests, and then beside a long still lake, with reeds growing at its edges, and low wooded hills around it.

Once we stopped at a pretty little wayside inn beside a waterfall, with immense trees covering all the mountain-side, and drank glasses of German beer—and very good it was. An immense amount of politeness and numberless pretty speeches went on between Monsieur

and the host. Mademoiselle expressed some alarm as to the digestive capabilities of an enormous St.-Bernard-crossed mastiff, and held her snub-nosed darling close in her embrace. But the big dog either was not hungry or didn't like pugs, in which I heartily agreed with him, and took no notice of the little wretch; so all was well, and we started off on our moist green way.

There was so much damp in the air, and everything about us was of such a deep green shade, that our drive was curiously like the sensation of being under water.

We gained a good deal of knowledge, however, about French politics from our little gray friend. The country was going rapidly to —— well, the Father of the Freemasons, who were all atheists and sons of the Evil One. This and most of our friend's information was new to us, but all knowledge is welcome.

The French Government appeared to be in a perilous condition. The present rulers were all Freemasons, and having taken the oath of Freemasonry, received power from Satan to harm the Church. Thus it was that the religious orders were robbed, the priests bullied, the schools secularised, and Catholics persecuted.

A Freemason was only another name for an atheist. My husband mildly suggested that no atheist could become a Freemason in England, to which the Frenchman replied that he knew for a fact that all the French Masons were unbelievers. His fear of Freemasonry was astonishing, and the abolition of that institution was his sole cure for France. Presently he talked of the Franco-German war. He had been in the battle of Sedan, he said, with the air of a hero. Ultimately it turned out that he had been with the ambulance corps, and upon further inquiry was compelled in truth to say that he had not been under fire at all. His accusations against the Germans were sweeping and strong, but they did not agree with the statements of other people, so that we believed as much as we chose, especially as there was a general tone of exaggeration in his conversation. Presently he changed the subject again, and asked my husband if he were a Scotsman.

"Only partially so," was the answer. "Why do you ask?"

"Because I see that you wear the Scottish dress."

Now this was rather hard, considering that my husband, being clad in a very ample pair of

knickerbockers, was particularly well supplied with those garments in which the Scottish attire is proverbially deficient; but it was not easy to convince him that a kilt was not a "*divided* skirt," for he had been to Jersey, and had seen Highland regiments there, so knew better.

Having caught a real live Englishman, our friend wished for some authentic information on English affairs. By way of obtaining some, he suddenly dropped into an attempt at the English language, saying—

"Vat ees your politiques?"

"Le mot 'politiques,'" said my husband solemnly, "comprends en lui-même un étude difficile d'un magnitude pas inconsiderable," which was at any rate as good French as Count Smorltork's English version thereof. The Frenchman looked impressed, but puzzled; however, reverting to his own tongue, he went on to compare the position of the Roman Catholics of England with that of their co-religionists in France.

'"We are persecuted like the early Christians! It is the world against the Church again, as when the Emperors were Pagans! But you—you in England, Protestants though you may be, have learnt the grand lesson of toleration."

"There is no pleasing some people," said my husband. "You can't think how pleased our Roman Catholics would be if they could only persuade us to persecute them a little."

M. le Français did not quite like this levity, but he soon recovered, and conversation went on merrily. His curiosity was unbounded, and I am afraid our statements were a little bit exaggerated, but that may be set down to the intricacies of French arithmetic, especially in an attempt to render the amount of the Archbishop of Canterbury's income in francs, which, in the absence of pencil and paper to work it out on, came out at something larger than the total grant to the French Church. But it only caused profane breakings of the Third Commandment (English calculation), and cries of envy.

Evidences of the thoughtfulness and care of the Vosges Club were abundant as we wound along the Longemer Lake. The road is close to the lake on one side, and a precipice rises on the other side; and to cheer, guide, and comfort the traveller, the Vosges Club have considerately placed notice boards about every half-mile to assure the pilgrim that he is still in the right path. As the only way out of it is up the pre-

cipice, or down into the lake, the assurance must be very comforting. I think I counted six of these notices in three miles. The French frontier station for the examination of travellers is just beyond here, but we were not stopped and overhauled, to the evident satisfaction of Monsieur, who had filled his own and Madame's pockets with cigars at the Schlucht.

Gérardmer is a straggling red village of no interest or beauty, and with no antiquities, but it has a large hotel and mineral baths, and is a favourite French summer resort. The lake, which is small, and enclosed with low wooded hills, is very pretty indeed. On the whole, however, we did not care for the place much, for it was full of people,—about one hundred sat down to dinner,—and there were all the objectionablenesses of a fashionable watering-place there—invalids, noisy children and nurses, cast-iron chairs, "attractive" walks, with the attractions labelled, and a general clatter and rush and noise.

We parted from our friends here, for they were going on to Épinal to catch the train for Nancy. I was rather surprised, while they were waiting for their bill and Madame was seeing about her luggage, to observe Monsieur take

my husband by the arm and conduct him mysteriously down the street.

Presently they came back, and after we had said good-bye my husband told me that Monsieur had begged him to accompany him in paying a visit to "Le Bon Dieu," as he was going on a journey that night, and should feel more comfortable if he did so. He had spoken of it very much as he would have talked of getting an accident insurance ticket, but my husband consented gravely, of course, so they went down to the little church in the village. It was a pious and simple act, no doubt, but I failed to see why a witness of the ceremony was required.

We made the acquaintance of some English ladies at the table d'hôte, and a very charming young Breton lady, who fairly bristled when Germans were mentioned. She had been in Strasburg a month after the occupation, which accounted for her state of mind, and some of the anecdotes she related were not pretty. She herself saw a cart driven by a French Alsatian enter the city; the German on guard called to the man to stop. The poor fellow not understanding German, and not being in the habit of stopping at that particular place, drove on in

unconsciousness of his offence, whereupon the German fired, and sent a bullet into the back of a woman who was sitting in the cart. She herself, when asking for French change instead of German of a market-woman, had been told to go to the "Teufel" by a German officer who was standing near, but, as she was naturally indignant at being spoken to in such a manner by a man presumably a gentleman, she had not gone.

There was some dancing in the salon after dinner — of a very rough, wild sort, chiefly executed by Germans and Jews, and there were a number of girls about eight to twelve years old there who would have been far better in bed than aping their mamma's dress and flirtations at that hour of the night.

The one beauty about Gérardmer was the walk round the lake, and that was unmolested and peaceful. We went to see the baths the next morning, which were much like medical and mineral baths everywhere; they looked clean and good, and are very useful to many people doubtless, but they were not interesting to us, as we were not ill.

It was very wet the next morning: we went up the village street to find a cobbler, for one of the "uppers" of my husband's shoes

threatened dissolution of partnership with the sole. We found one at last, a queer little man in a queer little den, quite the traditional cobbler of fiction, with a friend to hand a newspaper, doubtless of seditious principles, in at the shutter window, all according to the best traditions. It took him quite a quarter of an hour to mend the shoe, and he extortioned thirty centimes out of us for the job. Cobblers must have a luxurious time in Alsace; we should have paid a shilling or eighteenpence for the same job in London.

We had engaged a carriage to drive us to La Bresse, a village some miles away, from whence we could cross a mountain on foot, and get to the Wildenstein valley. Twelve francs for a one-horse carriage for six miles was rather a high charge, but it was too far and too wet to walk.

The road was uphill most of the way, and lined with forests, until we came to a bare summit wrapped round with a thick fog, and then we began to descend. In a very short time we were out of the fog, and could see the valley of La Bresse, with its little cottages and detached houses, and bare hills surrounding it. It was not a very beautiful spot, but cleaner and

tidier than the more picturesque German villages.

We had an excellent dinner at the inn; the price, including a good light Burgundy in unlimited quantities, was three francs a head. At this meal we ate wild boar for the first time, and any meat more unlike pork cannot be met with. It was dressed like jugged hare, and, except that the flesh was firmer, coarser, and more highly flavoured, was very like hare. It made an excellent dish.

During dinner the rain ceased, the clouds blew away, and when we started on our walk there was hot sunshine streaming down the valley. For the first few miles our road lay along this valley of the Vologne, which gradually closed in narrower and narrower, and became wilder and less inhabited as we went on. We passed many cotton mills worked by a strong stream that flowed down the valley, and through the windows we could see numbers of girls and women at work there.

There was no squalid poverty or dirt, though the people looked poor, but the little gardens were carefully tended, and the cottages looked clean and tidy.

Towards the head of the valley we crossed

the stream by a stone bridge, and went by a steep path up the hillside. This was a short cut to the carriage road, which wound a good deal, and which we struck higher up. The hill was wooded, and wild raspberries and strawberries grew on the banks. There was no view until we crossed the summit of the Col de Bramont into Germany, and then we looked down into a long, winding, narrow valley, filled with forest at this end, but widening out into pastures farther on. To the right were wooded mountains; to the left, with the sunlight full upon its brown, grassy sides, the rocky ridge of the Ronde Tête.

The masses of forest hills fading into the blue distance, and the deep purple of the shadows below us, with the golden crest upon the right, made up a most lovely view. There were only two distractions: one was that we had to catch the post cart at Wildenstein in a very short time, or should have to remain there all night, and so be unable to go up the Gebweiler Belchen the next day; the other was that the road was positively lined with scarlet strawberries. I have never anywhere seen such strawberries, and their flavour was equal to their appearance. I struggle to forgive my enemies,

and generally do so, but I find it very hard to contemplate those lost strawberries with equanimity, for they were lost for ever to me in consequence of my husband's suddenly declaring he had no reliance upon his watch (for we had crossed the frontier and changed times), and we must hurry on or we should lose the post cart. And hurry on we did. I made a few snatches at bunches of ripe fruit that I really could not resist, and then we plunged down a short cut through the forests. The path was composed of small rolling stones, the road curved like a succession of S's all the way down, and at every curve we took a short cut, all at a break-neck pace, and as the short cuts were very steep and rough my feet were a great trial to me.

We got down into the valley in a very short space of time,—about an hour I think,—and then, of course, we found that the post cart was not going to start for at least half an hour, and that half-hour would have just done for the strawberries, and satisfied a yearning I shall never have satisfied now, for no strawberries will ever taste as I imagine those might have tasted.

Wildenstein itself was a rather dirty little

village, with a cotton factory, a big wine and brandy establishment, an uninteresting little modern church, clean and bright, and plenty of coal dust in the road,—the first coal dust we have seen in Alsace. This valley is one of the richest in the country on account of its great factories, and is thickly populated all the way down. All this upper end of the valley was very narrow and in deep shadow, while the light on the hills to the left was golden and warm.

We had a most lovely drive. As usual we were the only occupants of the mail cart except the boy who drove and the mail bags. The road was quite level, and very good; it passed through several large villages, along fields and trees, and the beautiful mountains on either side, —some dreamy in purple shadows and blue evening mists, with a rosy sky behind them, others golden and red in the light.

Standing in the middle of the fertile valley, which was there of a considerable width, was a curious great mass of boulders and trees, a young mountain in fact,—an isolated and precipitous wooded eminence, with the ruins of the old castle of Wildenstein upon it. Its effect, standing quite by itself, is very curious in the middle of a flat valley. A glacier is

responsible for the phenomenon, I believe. The castle formerly belonged to the Abbey of Murback. We were sorry we had not time to go and see the abbey, which is one of the finest Romanesque buildings in Alsace.

We passed through the villages of Krüth, Oderen, and Felleringen, all of them large, populous, tidy, and bright. Several flocks of geese and kids were on the road, each under the guardianship of an old man or woman. Of course we stopped at the post-office in each village, where the formality of handing out a limp bag was duly observed. The villages themselves presented no special object of interest, for the inhabitants had been wealthy enough to pull down their old churches and build new ones; and though the buildings were good in their way, they had no particular attraction for the tourist. The situation was the only really beautiful point about these villages, and except the Val Laventino, I know of no more picturesque valley.

We passed another of those curious isolated hills before we came to Wesserling, where we proposed staying for the night. Wesserling is a modern town built partly on what was once the moraine of a huge glacier. It does not look like a moraine,—generally a sort of magnified

dust-heap, — for pretty villas, gardens, and trees cover it all. Our hotel (Hôtel de Wesserling) was close to the station, for here the railway begins. They gave us quite a magnificent room, with a beautiful view of the town and mountains beyond; another valley joins the Saint Amarin Thal, as the main valley now begins to be called, and so one got a lovely perspective of mountains, dim and purple and pink in the sunset.

There was a garden below us belonging to the hotel, and the dark trees made a beautiful foreground to the crimson and saffron sky and dim mountains. I tried to make a sketch of the view from our window, but it gave a very very imperfect idea of the beauty we saw.

There was another interest attaching to the sunset, namely, the sort of weather it promised for to-morrow, for we hoped to climb the Gebweiler Belchen, the highest mountain in the Vosges, that day. On the whole the sunset was hopeful as well as beautiful, and when the saffron light had faded into citron we lit the candles with contentment, and proceeded to do a little amateur cobbling.

I had started well provided with a pair of Messrs. Dowie and Marshall's laced boots, and a pair of walking shoes of theirs also, but these

last were bad for rough walking, as affording no support to the ankles. My boots had fulfilled every requirement that boots can be expected to realise. They were perfectly comfortable, they wore well and looked well, but destiny in the shape of an hotel boots at Gérardmer had marred the noble work of Dowie and Marshall. I have no doubt my boots had been muddy, but he need not have cut through the upper leathers in removing the mud. There were two slits half an inch long on each side of my boot that gaped at every step. New boots were not to be thought of, so we endeavoured to remedy matters by sacrificing my indiarubber, melting it in the candle, and then smearing the parts together. It answered pretty well on the whole, but I take my own shoe-brush the next time I go on a walking tour, for the tender mercies of a "boots" are cruel.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HIGHEST OF THE VOSGES.

CONTRARY to our usual experience, the weather fulfilled its engagements with the sunset in the most satisfactory manner. The morning was bright and clear. A soft blue tint was over the mountains, and the valleys were golden with sunshine. We breakfasted early, and left Wesserling by one of the most inoffensive little local railways it has ever been our fortune to travel over.

The line goes down the Saint Amarin Thal, and presently we came to Saint Amarin itself, formerly an important place, but since its destruction during the Thirty Years' War but of little consequence to any besides its inhabitants, and perhaps not very much to them. The railway skirts the bank of the river, and three times crosses it before getting to Weiler, our present destination. We passed towns, villages, and cotton mills nearly the whole way, and the

smoke from the factories rolled in great clouds up into the still air. Without doubt this was the most prosperous place we had seen in the Vosges.

Weiler is the chief town in the valley, and has a population of 1150. There were not many of them in the streets as we passed through it, but their wealth was testified by a fine handsome modern Gothic church built of red sandstone. We rapidly left the town and struck into a valley running out of the left side of the Saint Amarin Thal.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the fine weather had put us into remarkably good spirits. Since the comparative failure of our walk along the Hautes Chaumes, and our not being able to go up the Hoheneck and walk along the ridge to the Ronde Tête, we had concentrated all our hopes upon the Gebweiler Belchen. This is the highest mountain in the Vosges, and is 4677 feet. In shape it is very like a balloon at the top (whence its French name, Ballon), for a great round knoll rests on a long spur of mountain ridge, and it is bare and smooth like a Welsh "Moel."

We saw its brown summit as we went up the Niettelbach valley, and also saw that the

soft white clouds that skirted the horizon clung about it in an unpleasant manner. They shifted and moved continually, but it remained a fact that the clouds were lower than the mountain, and, being no respecters of persons, might envelop us in their soft mist.

It seemed a terribly long way up to the top from the valley where we stood, and even in a straight line it was several miles from us, and we knew by travellers' reports that one cannot go in a straight line in a mountain country; but we did not quite believe their statements, because a straight line always seems such a simple affair.

When we had walked for about a couple of miles along the narrow green valley, with wooded hills on either hand, we turned aside and went up another valley, according to Baedeker's instructions. The sun by this time had become very hot, and there was not a breath of air. Presently we saw the village of Goldbach perched on a ridge above us. It seemed wonderful that it did not slip down from its rocky elevation. There was a pathway cut in the rock that led up to it—a marvellously steep pathway—and we toiled up it in the burning sun, and very hot and thirsty we became.

We had breakfasted so early that that meal seemed to have faded out of recognition. We hoped to dine at the top, where Baedeker says there is an hotel in the summer time, and at about this stage of our walk we agreed to sleep there too, for we were already tired, and we would get some lunch here.

Goldbach has one, and only one, distinction that we were able to find. It is the dirtiest place in Alsace. We thought we had seen manure before, but we found that we had never yet beheld it in absolute perfection. Although it was dry summer weather, the substance was four inches deep before the only inn in the place. An old man, the only creature we saw in the village, was cutting up wood outside the inn, and enjoying the odour of his wealth. He turned out to be the landlord, and promised us an omelette immediately. We had plenty of occupation in keeping the flies off before it came, and I have always been grateful that I never saw him cook it, or I am sure I could not have eaten it, good though it was. He brought it to table in a flat round earthen dish with a handle to it, which is, I suppose, the Alsatian equivalent for a frying-pan.

The old man spoke only Alsatian, so we

could get no information from him about the road. Had this been all we could have thanked Providence and relied on Baedeker; but the old man had a son. This young man had been educated; he had been in the Prussian army, and could speak French, and had once before seen a map. He asked to see ours, and traced out a route for us upon it. It was directly contrary to Baedeker's advice, but we could not rely upon Baedeker after the tricks he had played us. This young sprig assured us he knew the road quite well, and actually set us in it; we were to go up the right-hand side of the mountain instead of the left,—it was shorter and better he told us.

We congratulated ourselves and left. We went up a deep sandy lane until we came to a bare mountain-side. At the top of the lane we sat down, and looked at the white houses in Goldbach that were so pure and fair far off, and such foul dwellings close by, at the lovely valley beneath us up which we had come, and that was now blue in the distance, and the surrounding leafy hills.

Then we walked on, on and on, up an apparently interminable mountain-side. Not a tree was near us, not the least shade anywhere;

the sun was scorching hot and the path stony. My husband gradually divested himself of his superfluous clothing, but it was not of much use his doing so, as he had to carry it, and his knapsack gave grievous signs of breaking down. It was an "Alpine Porte" knapsack supported on canes and straps, so a collapse of the framework would have been a serious inconvenience. Baedeker puts the distance from Goldbach to the summit at two hours. We had already been that time, and could not even see the summit yet. We toiled up until we came to a sort of ridge, and there we hoped to find ourselves close to our desired destination.

We did see the Gebweiler Belchen; it was some miles to the left of us, and had thick clouds hovering about it. We were on another mountain altogether, where we had not the slightest business to be at all. It was very pretty there, but we did not seem to care about scenery any more. We sat down and said things about that young Alsatian.

Here we were, however, on a mountain ridge miles away from the top of the Belchen, with not a single dwelling-place in sight, and we were tired and hungry into the bargain. Below us was an undulating valley, with pastures and

forests and a few cattle-sheds, but no sign of a village anywhere. Lonely mountains were all about us, and we were not at all clear as to where we really were.

A long ridge went from us up to the Gebweiler Belchen. The only thing to be done was to make a bee-line for the summit and go there. It seemed simple enough. There was an honest unpretending mountain-side before us, and we simply had to go across it and strike up hill.

"We shall have no difficulty in getting there, really," my husband said; "it is straight open country the whole way."

After an hour and a half's climbing we decided we had been up and down enough hills, excrescences, vales, and hollows to stock a decent English county with mountain scenery, and these all came on that deceitful smooth-looking hillside, that had laid itself out in this unimposing manner to deceive the guileless traveller.

Presently we heard a cow bell. Cow bells do not rank among our favourite musical instruments, but this one was very pleasant to our ears. Where there are cows there is milk, where there is milk there are men.

We found the men after a time; they were in a cheese-farm built on a grassy slope. The house was a low one-storied stone building, divided into two compartments, and from general appearances the men and cattle both occupied it. They had arranged matters on a truly fraternal basis. The men had one deal table and one form, and some old boots; the cattle had all the floor, and their cheeses drained upon the shelves, while their milk boiled in a huge cauldron over an open fire.

The supply of manure was strictly limited to space; the floor held all it could—if there had been any more it would have had to be taken outside. The other parts of the rooms held all the mud that the men had been patiently accumulating for a long series of years (except what they carried about them), so harmony evidently prevailed, and a spirit of equality and fraternity rested upon all.

I had often wondered what gave mountain cheeses the peculiar sour taste they have. I know now, though I don't eat them any more. I have seen them making, and smelt the room in which they drain. Half a smell of it would fill a street.

The men were very civil. We learnt after-

wards that one of them (the dirtiest) was the Mayor of Rambach. The cows belonging to a district are all driven in the summer to certain upland pastures, which are carefully parcelled out, and a few men take charge of them and make the cheeses,—the owners of the cows each receiving their respective portions at the end of the summer.

We had some milk to drink, with cream floating about in it, and very good it was. The Münster cheeses, which are widely celebrated, are made from the froth of the milk as it boils up. We saw a man ladling it out of the cauldron into a pan.

We climbed up a stiff grass slope to where some stunted beeches grew, and there rested a little, while some cows came and blinked at us. A stone wall divides two cantons (or hundreds) just above this, and we got over it and then stumbled about among great boulders for a while. The hollows between them, filled with brambles and long grass, were so unpleasantly suggestive of snakes that I was glad to get away from them on to the grassy slope of the Ballon itself.

An ominous cloud that had been hovering over us here took itself off, and we had a

magnificent view of the valley below us, and ridge after ridge of blue mountain-tops fading away into the distant west.

We sat down and rested, and reviewed our position. We were just at the foot of the balloon-shaped summit itself—it was impossible that the top could be very far off. We decided to go straight up until we came to the top.

It is not very easy to climb up a nearly perpendicular wall covered with short slippery grass. We did not have to go backwards, as the little Irish boy did to get to school in the snow, but we had to go on all fours to keep on. I felt rather like a fly on a ceiling, or as I imagine a fly might feel, for I am not conscious of having experienced life as a fly, though if the metempsychosists are right I may have done so.

This being the most inconvenient place where it could happen, my husband's knapsack gave out entirely, and refused to work properly any more. This was hard on him; I generally carry the bag of sketching materials, and odds and ends, and my ulster; but I was so completely done up by my long climb that I could barely carry myself, so he had taken them from me. We sat down to patch up the knapsack

as best we could, and resisted the impulse to loosen our hold of it and send it down the mountain into the valley below. It would have gone like a ball, the descent was so smooth and steep.

"Well, we must be near the top now," my husband said; "it is impossible there can be much farther to go unless the mountain has taken to growing."

"It is quite equal to it," I replied, for I was fearfully tired. "I hope we shall not find the hotel full."

"I won't leave if it is," he answered sturdily. "I am not going down this hill again for any innkeeper in Alsace."

"It must be nearly four," I said.

"Quite that," he answered. "We have been four hours on this blessed old mountain. I said in Switzerland that next time I went up a mountain I would go in a balloon, but I didn't bargain for the outside of one."

We went on again, and presently I exclaimed with delight on seeing him reach the top. He did not respond, and I found when I joined him that there was yet another top, and a good way off. We went towards it, but we said very little by the way, for where was the hotel? We passed an Ordnance Survey hut and pole,

and at last we came in sight of the hotel on the farther topmost bit of the mountain.

It was built of stone, and had one window, with a wooden shutter to it. The floor was of earth, the roof dripped upon it, the furniture consisted of a dirty plank table and a form; and that was all. There were no waiters, no landlord, no beds, no food, and, worst of all, no drink!

We sat down on the grass, and for a few moments I don't think we were even able to call Baedeker names. The situation was too powerful for language. We could not do justice to it, so we patiently sat down and thirsted.

We were most frightfully thirsty. We had nothing with us to drink except a few drops of brandy that we carry for use in cases of emergency. We decided that this was an emergency, and drank it in a sip each, but it did not allay our thirst, only stayed our hunger a little, and gave us courage to look at the scenery with a little more cheerfulness.

Truly the view was most magnificent. It had need to be, or we should not have looked at it. A deep green gorge separated us from the Storkenkopf, a bare-headed mountain opposite us on the west. This formed the end of a long brown ridge of hills that ran right back to the

Hoheneck, and formed a continuation of the Hautes Chaumes, and makes the backbone of the Vosges system. It was a broad grass ridge, bare and brown, with one or two tiny chalets dotted about on it, and here and there masses of stone. The pine forests crept half-way up its sides, but did not venture into the cold clear air any farther. Numberless wooded hills sloped down from this ridge, and faded away into blue distance; while just below us, in a hollow of pine forests, lay a little green lake, the Belchensee. It was beautiful, lying so calm and bright amid the blue of the woods and the bare hills.

We had been looking towards the north-west and west, and then we turned to the south, where the sun was making the distant ranges of mountain faint and blue in the afternoon mist. For miles and miles we saw them, right away towards Belfort. I should almost think we saw the nearest Jura mountains. Of course we looked right over the Saint Amarin Thal, and must have seen most of the southern French Vosges. It was by far the most extensive view we had yet had, and the most varied.

On the other side towards the east we ought to have seen the valley of the Rhine and the

Black Forest, but all that we saw was a dense cloud that covered all the country on that side. We minded this cloud the less, as we had lately seen the Rhine valley and the Black Forest several times, and it was rather a relief to find a view where we could not see either of them: they were getting monotonous.

We sat for some time on the top of the Gebweiler Belchen. The sun was getting low in the heavens and throwing all the eastern side of the Storkenkopf and the pine forests below into deep shadow, while the lake reflected the blue sky and sunny clouds. The blue distance was getting dreamier and bluer, and the light in the valleys more golden. It was hard to go away from such a lovely scene, and the longer we stayed in that fresh pure air the stronger and brighter we felt. We quite recovered our spirits in a little while, and began to think it was rather a joke to be stranded on a mountain towards evening with only very slight knowledge of where to find a bed.

The only information we could get upon this subject was the following:—"About ¾ h. below the summit lies a small lake, whence a good path leads by the Rolle (Inn opposite the falls of the Seeback) to the Lauchthal." Now that gave us

no information at all as to how far it was to the Rolle, or what a Rolle was when one got to it, and the falls of the Seeback were not marked on the map. A something—we did not know what—called "Die Rolle" was marked, and that looked a long way off even in a straight line; and we doubted the practicability of straight lines now.

However, as the only other alternative was to go back to Weiler, and that was really out of the question, we decided to strike for the Rolle. Keeping the lake well in front of us we plunged down the hill, starting a huge black heathcock (coq de bruyère) up from his rest as we did so. This was the only time we saw any sort of game anywhere, though we were constantly assured the woods were full of boars, rabbits, foxes, and birds.

We went through a stunted beech wood, and then left the grassy mountain and plunged into a pine forest. The ground was very damp and soft, masses of moss-covered stones were strewn about, and delicate fronds of long ferns grew in clumps under the thick branches. Now and then we could catch a glimpse of the lake below us looking curiously like a bit of sky that had fallen from its place. The hill was very steep, so steep that every pace forward gave

one a plunge down, and to add to the unpleasantness of this we were compelled to follow the course of a little stream that trickled down its rocky bed, or we could not have got on at all. Presently the stream turned on one side or dispersed itself—I forget which, but we left it and came into a beech wood.

The ground was of a deep red-brown with many years' leaves, and so soft that I sank nearly to my knees at every step. There were no flowers growing in these woods, for the light was too dim and green for flower life. The tall, slender, pale gray trunks closed thickly about us, and shut out every glimpse of the outer world, —not even the lake was to be seen, nothing but slim gray lines that seemed to flit before us as we went plunging down.

We left the beech wood and came into another fir wood,—truly the way down seemed interminable. We saw the lake lying still far beneath our feet, and here I regret to say I rather lost my temper. I could bear with fatigue and hunger, but I could not endure first draggling my petticoats down a stream, and then dragging them down a perpendicular hill of leaf mould and having them drained into my boots. Female flesh and blood could not put up with

reverses of this sort when travelling with only one dress. I found refuge for my outraged feelings and damaged wardrobe by telling my husband I had always predicted that this walk would be a failure. The absolute untruthfulness of this remark compensated me in a slight degree for the damage done to my clothing, as of course he indignantly denied that I had ever said anything of the kind, and then I forgave him for speaking hastily, and felt so virtuous that petticoats faded into mere materialistic affairs, and we sat down by the side of the lake at last, and enjoyed the scenery.

Birch trees grew by the water's edge, and their beautiful tassels touched the lake, and so still was it that they did not make even a ripple upon the surface. The pine and beech woods were reflected as in a mirror, and above them the swelling dome of the Gebweiler Belchen. Long blue shadows were flung across by the Storkenkopf, and lengthened out every moment. We could not see the sun, only the glowing sky and the light on the hill to our left. The edge of the lake is rocky, and ferns and flowers grow among the stones, and one fantastic birch tree seemed to spring from a mossy stone that had fallen into the water.

It was really one of the most beautiful little lakes imaginable, so very, very quiet and lonely, yet not desolate and forbidding as many mountain lakes are.

Unfortunately there was one sign of civilisation. A rough log hut had been erected at the farther end of the lake, and bore signs of having been used for the sale of bottled beer, and bits of paper were strewn about it that seem indispensable to picnic parties. The path that skirted one side of the lake went past this house, and beyond it we saw some red dashes on the trunks of some pines that were evidently intended to direct the traveller, for as yet there was but a very rudimentary path through the woods.

We plunged into this pine wood, and followed the red markings on the trees until they left off, which of course they did when a second path joined the first. By this familiar token we recognised the presence of our old friends the Vosges Club.

Of course we went along the wrong path first; I don't know where it would have led us,—to the Storkenkopf, I believe. When we had satisfied ourselves that we were wrong we went back and tried the other, and found that the red dashes began again farther on. They left off

after a while to appear again no more, and we went on and on through such thick woods that we could only see a few yards on each side. The path seemed interminable, and it was rapidly getting dark. We began to fear that we had taken the wrong road after all, and had come into some purposeless mountain path that led to nowhere in particular, or ended in a timber cutting.

We were further confirmed in the impression that we were on a timber slide by the path assuming "corduroy" characteristics. This means that the track was composed of logs of wood about three feet in length, placed about three feet apart. It makes about the most uncomfortable path to walk on of any I know, as the spaces between the logs soon get filled with bog and water in a moist wood.

It was getting so very dark that we began to seriously discuss the plan of spending the night in the woods, as it would be by no means safe to follow the path in the dark, or we might shoot over a precipice after the manner of felled trees, or be tumbled into a torrent. It was not a pleasant prospect, but it was just as agreeable as going on in our present condition. However, we were not going to give in while any light remained, so we toiled on, and were

abundantly rewarded by the logs leaving off and our coming out upon a pasture of which the hay had been newly cut.

This encouraged us wonderfully, and by the time the last light faded from the sky we came upon a little low house shaded by fruit trees, and saw some haymakers sitting under a shed before the door.

This was the Rolle Inn, so all our apprehensions were in vain, and we should get food and beds. We never looked upon any landlord more kindly than we did upon the fat urbane host of the Rolle, who waddled out to meet us in the widest trousers I ever saw.

We could have beds, he said. I fear it might have fared ill with him if he had said we could not, for my husband's stature is not easily matched in these parts, and he would have fought for food and rest if need be. As it happened, there were no little difficulties to be smoothed over, for we were the only guests there.

What would we have for dinner? he asked.

Anything he had, we replied; only let it be as quickly as possible, and bring us some bread and wine at once; give us the best they had of everything—a very safe order.

The room we were shown into was not

sumptuous; indeed it was a bare apartment, with three deal tables and some seats, and was apparently the household and visitors' room all in one. We were shown our bedroom. It was about a hundred yards from the house, and was one of three little rooms built by themselves on a grassy slope amidst fruit trees. We liked having it all to ourselves, though it looked horribly damp and was all dismantled, but we were assured it would all be made right in a few moments.

Our host, who was a stout slow man, evidently designed by nature to smoke long pipes and look wise while he hung about doors, was a person of very great consequence to himself. He introduced a pocket edition of himself, who wore marvellous boots with many buttons, and whose head was as smooth and round as a ball. Madame was not introduced, and appeared to combine the offices of cook and chambermaid, and do all the general work of the establishment while her husband looked on. She was an active, wiry little woman, and was suffering from face-ache.

We had a very good dinner. Perhaps no dinner will ever taste better to us than that dinner did. To lunch very lightly at eleven,

and to dine at nine, and to walk the intervening hours in fine fresh air over mountains, does not make one inclined to quarrel with the cook. We praised Madame's cooking a great deal that night, but the next day we felt that we had over-rated her powers. I don't suppose we shall ever taste again such fried trout as we had that night.

Our host stood by and conversed all the time. He talked very bad French, but a good deal of it, except on one subject, that of smuggling, possibly for reasons.

We picked our way across the soft grass under the cherry trees to our room. We thought it would be pleasant to have the place to ourselves,—and so it would have been; but a large and industrious colony had settled there before we made our appearance. The beds were not merely damp, but wet. In spite of all these drawbacks, however, we slept very well.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ROLLE AND THE LAUCHTHAL.

We got up very late the next morning in spite of the bright sun that had been pouring in at our windows for hours. We had two little white-curtained windows in our room, and as we opened them the scent of new-mown hay was wafted in at them, and delicious fresh warm air. We were curious to see what "Die Rolle" was like by daylight, for we had a very imperfect sight of it the night before.

We were on a gently-sloping hillside covered with grass, most of which had been newly mown. Cherry and pear trees were strewn all over it, and lower down the hill descended abruptly, almost precipitously, and was very thickly wooded. Opposite us, on the other side of the ravine, was a rocky fir-covered hill, down which a waterfall leaped from ledge to ledge until it reached the bottom of the ravine. Fir-covered hills rose on either side of this waterfall, and behind the cleft

formed by it rose the bare Gebweiler Belchen. The hills sloped gradually away on either side of the valley below us, and were lost in the distance; at our back were the forests we had come through last night. We saw few more beautiful places than Die Rolle in which to spend a few days of perfect peace and quiet.

We found a forester, a fine tall young fellow, conversing with our host in the inn room. He was dressed, as a forester should be dressed, all in green of a rather dull hue, and in his felt hat he wore a little piece of eagle's feather. He was an Alsatian, and, in spite of the Imperial eagle on his hat, had his own Alsatian views of the Germans. He had been in the French army, and gave his opinion on Bazaine with the same force and almost in the same words as the landlord of the Golden Apple at Nieder-Haslach had done. Bazaine was "Canaille de la première classe," a traitor, etc. etc., and he would shoot him if he met him in the forest as he would shoot a fox. Not a powerful simile to English ears, but, on the whole, Bazaine had better keep clear of the ceded provinces for a bit until the affair of Metz blows over, though any one but a modern Methuselah will be gathered to his ancestors before then.

It seems that there was plenty of food in Metz and Strasburg at the surrender. Belfort was the only good defence. He talked of the sports of the woods. Beyond a doubt there is good sport there, and that of an exciting kind. He had lately found a boar as big as a donkey! Ten francs are paid to the forester by the Government for killing a boar, and five for a wild goat, and the meat goes to the Government and is sold. Permission to shoot may be had from the Chef du Garde, and is easy to obtain, and game is plentiful. The close time ends on the 1st of September. If boars come on private land the owners may shoot them, but they have to give information to the forester. On the whole, the forests of the Vosges would be a promising place for English sportsmen, and there would be the satisfaction of killing something large, to say nothing of a spice of danger, for a boar is a fierce beast. These animals do a good deal of damage among the potatoes and vines. They will root up a whole field in a night,—but fields are not large here.

The salary of a forester is 1800 marks (£90), which seems very fair pay, especially as there are perquisites besides.

In the course of conversation my husband

offered his tobacco pouch to the forester and the landlord, who returned the compliment with theirs, and the talk turned on tobaccos. It was curious to find that the Alsatians, though they liked the taste of it, found the English tobacco a good deal too strong. This was an astonishing fault to find with "light returns," and they were decidedly surprised to learn that much stronger tobaccos were commonly smoked in England. As for the Alsatian tobacco, my husband's report of it is not favourable (*I* did not try it). It was very nasty, and without any strength at all.

Presently the forester shouldered his double-barrelled muzzle-loader and took his leave. He offered to take my husband to the Belchensee to show him some game, but he would not go, as he was too tired after the long hard day on the Gebweiler Belchen. If he could have been promised a real live boar he might perhaps have tried it in spite of the fatigue, but with the prospect of a long walk in the afternoon it was better not to go.

The landlord talked in an aggrieved manner of the results of the German occupation. It seems that he pays 1800 francs in taxes for a not very large house in Gebweiler. This is a

practical objection to German government. Another practical objection seemed to be certain educational difficulties. He would not have his son taught at a German school, of which he had the poorest possible opinion, and it was not easy to send him to a French school, there being an average-sized mountain between his house and the nearest one, to say nothing of intervening forests, frontiers, and so on. At present he managed to get a private tutor in Gebweiler, but it was very expensive,—in fact everything was very expensive (including the Rolle Hotel, as we afterwards discovered), and the Prussians had caused it all. Whereupon he applied naughty French words to the Prussians, and left us for a while, though he gave us a good deal of his company all the morning.

I went out after breakfast to make a sketch of the waterfall, and we lay on the hay under the trees and did a good deal of "lazing" after our long walk of yesterday. It was indescribably lovely and peaceful there under the shade of the cherry trees in the strong fresh air, with a bright sun and lovely views of forest hills, rocky ravines, the waterfall, and the distant mountains. We longed to stay here for a few days, but we could not spare the time; besides, our beds

were seriously against a prolonged stay being agreeable.

Our landlord informed us that every Sunday numbers of people came there on pleasure excursions from Gebweiler and Lautenbach, as many as a hundred at a time. We fancy he must make a good thing of it up here, for his charges were the highest we had yet met with.

We had dinner at the same time and in the same room as the rest of the family, namely, the host and his wife and son, and a heavy stupid man-of-all-work. The haymakers, men and women, ate their bread and cheese and drank their wine under an open sort of shed, with a long table in it, that was doubtless erected for the convenience of the Sunday excursionists.

We had hoped to have been able to get a carriage here to take us on to Lautenbach, but there was nothing of the kind at the inn, and the host did not seem able or willing to send a man down to fetch one for us, so we were obliged to walk to Lautenbach, and were rather unfit for doing so. However, our host and his man sturdily insisted that the walk to Lautenbach was only one hour. Nobody ever would give the distance—it was always so many hours. It looked about seven kilometres on the map, so

we decided to allow two hours, as that would give us plenty of time to take things easily.

We had had some more or less interesting conversations with our host, but we considered he charged too highly for the information he gave us. At least, if he had not charged for his conversation, we could not account for the total of our bill. It was the only place in Alsace where there was any attempt at anything like extortionate prices.

We took the heavy-looking man with us, or rather we went with him for the first part of our way, as he was going down into the Lautenbach valley and could show us a short cut. We went down the orchard and then into a path that wound along the left side of the ravine. Below us were pines and tumbled rocks and the dashing torrent from the waterfall; on the other side a densely-wooded mountain that went high up into the still air, and had filmy traces of summer mist about its head.

The flowers along our path were most beautiful, whole brakes of purple and yellow and white blossoms, and bushes of glistening scarlet berries, with here and there a great cluster of raspberry-canes, with their delicately-flavoured

fruit hanging on them. We constantly crossed little streams that flowed from the rocks above us and tumbled down beneath our feet to join the torrent below.

Of course we were descending all the time, but when we came to a little wood of fir trees on a knoll at the end of the ravine our guide plunged down among their stems, and we preferred taking the more winding path, our experience of short cuts yesterday leaving its wholesome influence behind it.

There were more raspberries and strawberries growing on this slope, but my husband would not let me stay to gather many. With the suspicion born of a course of deceiving peasantry and mistaken guide-books, he wanted to hurry on. We were soon in the Lautenbach valley, which was very narrow at this end, down which the torrent rushed over its rocky bed.

There was a good broad carriage road following the course of the stream, and apparently cut out of the rocky precipice on the right of the valley. Some fine oak trees shaded it at intervals, and under these we saw some splendid specimens of the purple emperor butterfly. One came and settled down in the dust just before

our feet, and spread his wings in the sunshine as if to show himself off.

We passed some sawmills lower down, and a very gorgeous cut granite head forester's house. The head foresters are all Germans, of course. The valley gradually widened, and broad level grassy tracts appeared, and then detached houses and the outskirts of a straggling village, with the usual great cotton factory in its midst.

This was Linthal, I believe, and the village straggled up a side valley to the left. It was a prosperous, clean-looking place. The houses were all whitewashed, and several very nice-looking villas, with pretty gardens—the residences, I imagine, of the factory owners—skirted the road. Immense walnut trees were planted beside the road in some places, but mostly the glaring white path was very hot and shadeless.

We passed a church and several crucifixes, some with garlands of pine and acacia round them. The population is entirely Catholic about here.

We passed very few people on the road, and our chief interest was rapidly being centred on the mile stones, or rather kilometre stones, that appeared at intervals. We had been already

nearly two hours upon the road, and were still a good way from Lautenbach. A perfidious peasantry had again misled us.

The valley grew broader and broader, the wooded hills slipped back farther and farther from the flat grass fields. The roaring torrent had become a sleek gliding river. We walked on and on as quickly as we could,—very hot and dusty,—and at last saw the high roofs of Lautenbach as we turned a corner of the road. We raced down the clean white streets as quickly as possible, for the time of the post cart's departure was at hand. Just at the moment it was advertised to start we rushed into the square before the church, and saw to our immense relief a shabby waggonette standing before the inn door.

Nothing but the absolute necessity of our reaching England by a certain day would have made us take our seats in it then, for on the other side of the square was one of the most beautiful Romanesque façades I have ever seen.

There were two towers to the west end of the church, the northern one with a spire. The whole of the west front was Romanesque, and so was the south transept; the rest was modern. A beautiful vaulted vestibule, with, I

believe, six pillars—but I will not be sure of the number—and finely worked arches and capitals, was just opposite us. All the work was very fine and good, and so were the rows of pillars and windows above. I tried to get a hasty sketch, but we had only a moment or two before the waggonette started. It was a great pity we had been deceived as to the length of the road, or we might have given ourselves time to visit one of the finest churches we have come across.

The drive to Gebweiler was not a particularly interesting one. The valley became broader and the hills lower. The population seemed large and prosperous, and good houses abounded.

We passed the entrance to the Murbach valley, where the church belonging to the old Benedictine abbey of Murbach is. The abbot of former days who presided over this establishment ranked as a prince, and bore as his device a black greyhound, from whence arose an old saying, "Haughty as the Murbach hound," which speaks but poorly for the humility of the Benedictines of that abbey. The present church was consecrated in 1139, though the abbey was founded in 727. The nave has

disappeared, but enough remains to rank the church as among the finest Romanesque buildings in Alsace. Probably the church we had just seen was built about the same period. Alsace seems to be particularly rich in Romanesque buildings.

Gebweiler, which is the capital of the district, is a good-sized town, with 11,500 inhabitants, and is situated at the entrance of the valley we had come down, the Lauchthal. It has cotton, cloth, sugar, and engineering factories. We left the post cart here, and, as we had an hour or two before our train started, set off for a ramble about the town.

We went to a church close by first; service in it was just over. It is a fine example of transition style begun in 1182; some arches are round, others pointed, and with very slight mouldings. It has double aisles, a transept, and three towers of unequal height. Like so many Alsatian churches, it also possesses a fine Romanesque porch, which occupies the whole of the west front, and has some good sculptures on it.

We wandered about there and came out by a back way to avoid an inquisitive crowd of children who had shown a disposition to mob us directly we appeared.

Down a side street we discovered a fine fourteenth-century Dominican church, used now as a warehouse. (In England they pull a church down and secularise materials and site piecemeal; here they do it en bloc. Which is best?) Meanwhile there is a massive classical church close by, erected in 1759 by the prince abbots of Murbach when they transferred their residence to Gebweiler. Outside the parish church (St. Legerius), the first one we had seen, was a curious sixteenth-century fountain, with a figure of a mitred abbot or bishop, probably St. Legerius, on the top. Possibly this also was erected by the abbots of Murbach. It was quaint and pretty, and no doubt useful.

I cannot say very much for the savouriness of Gebweiler streets, but I can bestow unlimited praise upon its confectionery. We bought the most delicious little cakes and puffs and biscuits for a few pence, which we consumed in the train afterwards. There seem to be very fair shops in the town, and we saw several private carriages.

At some of the street corners there were carvings or pictures of the Virgin and Child, some of them very well done, and painted in colours.

The train from Gebweiler to Bollweiler is a short branch, and the carriages are built on the Swiss or American plan. Bollweiler is on the main line to Strasburg, and is of course in the Rhine plain. We had a beautiful view of the purple mountains against the sunset sky as we went along the plain. The Gebweiler Belchen looked an immense way up; we could scarcely believe that we had come from just under its shadow that day.

At Bollweiler we changed trains and went on to Colmar, having the mountains to our left, growing dimmer and bluer in the air.

The castle of Egesheim was pointed out to us. Indeed castles seemed to stand on almost every spur of hill above the plain. In the interior one does not see so many castles. The rich Rhine plain must have had superior attractions for the barons bold of the period. One sees their effect in the prevailing Alsatian custom of having no front door, but a courtyard that could be defended in case of need.

We were very sore at heart that evening; we had had our last mountain walk; we should know those beautiful forests and wonderful blue recesses and misty hill-tops no more; we had

come down into commonplace life among commonplace things. As we went on to Colmar and saw the stately range upon our left grow darker and more mysterious in the sunset air, I am sure we hated the plains and the cities, and would have given much to have been back at the Rolle, or on the slope of the Gebweiler Belchen again. We saw its purple head among the clouds now with a glory of scarlet reflected on it. The wonderful blue that characterises all this range was now fast turning to purple in the evening. I have often wondered whence this peculiar blue arose. The most casual observer travelling from Strasburg to Bâle must have noticed the intense blueness of the hollows of these hills. I first saw them years ago when going to Italy, and not even Italian landscapes could wear out the impression of the blue Vosges from my mind. This colouring is not visible in the Jura, or in the Black Forest: it seems peculiar to these Alsatian hills. On a summer afternoon, seen from the plains, the sky looks pale beside them—they are so deeply, intensely blue.

At Colmar we had three-quarters of an hour to wait for the train to Turkheim, where we intended to sleep. We went into the nearest

café for some coffee and rolls, which were a long while being brought, and bad when they did come. A party of young soldiers came in while we were there, and were very noisy over their beer, but otherwise inoffensive.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TURKHEIM.

THE line from Colmär to Turkheim becomes more and more picturesque as it leaves the plain and runs towards the broad Münster Thal, whose other end we had seen from the Hautes Chaumes. The line goes beside a canal for a great part of the way, and lines of tall poplars growing beside the water's edge rear their dark forms against the sky. Vineyards and cornfields abound, so also do paths across the railway, the approach to which was always heralded by the ringing of a big bell on the engine. We never saw anybody in these roads, not even a cow; but we suppose there might have been, and doubtless the inhabitants of these regions require some such elaborate precautions to keep them out of harm's way.

The pace of these little branch lines is not alarming—something like that of an omnibus

going down Cheapside in the middle of the day. This gave us plenty of time to admire the scenery, and though it was getting very dark, we could still distinguish the gleaming of water, the black poplars, the distant mountains, and the vines that almost flung themselves into our windows.

When we reached Turkheim it was too dark to have more than a very vague general impression of an isolated station, a broad bridge over a shallow river, long lines of trees on a boulevard, some houses, and a massive old gateway with a spire upon the top.

Our hotel was outside the town and on the boulevard. We ordered some dinner, and then went out to look at the town; but it was too dark to see much, and the streets were only lighted by the shop windows, so we soon came back again.

The next day was Sunday. Our windows looked upon the boulevard, and we saw there assembled little groups of people, all in their Sunday best, and evidently going to church. After breakfast we followed their example, and made two of a crowded congregation in a large modern church.

The general features of the service were

very much the same as those at Rappoltsweiler —hearty congregational singing, in which the people and organ went on on their own account. They unduly prolonged their efforts to-day, for they had to suddenly pull up at "Et incarnatus" in the Creed on finding that the priest had got on to the "Sursum Corda." They were all very devout and well behaved. We could not get a seat, so stood with a crowd of other people, chiefly men, at the end of the church.

The alms were collected by two delicate quiet-looking little girls dressed in blue and white, who were escorted by an enormous Suisse in gorgeous get-up.

We had not much time to spend in Turkheim, and standing is tiring work, so we went out after a time and explored the town. It is just as old and quaint, though not so picturesque, as Rosheim. The walls are all standing, and the gates of the city still remain. I made a sketch of one; they were all much alike. The houses are all old, many of them with stepped gables or timber fronts, the streets paved with round stones, eminently unsuited for pedestrians. Everybody appeared to have gone to church, for we met not a single person in the whole

town, except one woman with a tiny baby in her arms. The place was absolutely deserted.

We went outside the town and came round the walls outside. They are dilapidated in places, and houses have been built on them, and windows knocked through them here and there. The moat in some places has been made into a cabbage garden, and several modern houses have been built outside the walls.

We re-entered the city and were sauntering down the principal street, looking at the quaint old timber houses, and noting the general stillness of everything, when we heard the tinkle of a little bell and saw a man in a red cloak appear at the corner of the street.

We of course concluded that a priest was taking the Host to some sick person, and stood on the little side walk to let him pass. Then we beheld the following procession :—

Three men in red cloaks, with a cross and two banners, one of St. Sebastian, the other of St. Joseph.

Then a long procession of boys and young men, all arranged according to age or size, and chanting the "Ave Maria" in German. At intervals two men would begin the first part and the rest reply in chorus.

Then came a crucifix carried by an acolyte. Then a long procession of girls and young women all chanting. Then a number of women carrying banners, and after them confraternity girls all dressed in blue and white, and carrying tapers, and in their midst four girls carried a white image of the Blessed Virgin.

Then came a wonderful collection of old women and middle-aged women,—perhaps the mothers of those who had gone before,—all carrying tapers. Another banner, and then the old men followed their wives. Some acolytes in red cassocks and a few priests, one of them in a white cope bearing the Host in his hands, brought up the rear, and following them came miscellaneous members of the congregation who had not joined the regular procession.

At least 2000 people must have passed us as we stood at the street corner, and who beside ourselves were there to look on? Three women and one small child. The entire population was apparently in the procession.

We went back to the church to see what followed, and the Litany of the Virgin was concluded there, the blessing given, and the congregation went away.

The sight had been a curious one to English

eyes, one of the most curious features being the absolute lack of self-consciousness on the part of the performers. I have seen plenty of processions in England;—High Church ones in the east of London, where the processionists desired holy martyrdom at the hands of an infuriated Protestant mob, only there was no mob; Salvation Army processions, where the endeavour to make everybody else uncomfortable was ably conceived and as ably carried out. Teetotal and Sunday School processions are of course suggestive of new clothing and a day's holiday; while non-religious processions, such as volunteers and Freemasons, are more matters of convenience to show numbers, or to get about in an orderly manner, than anything else;—but I never saw, except in Turkheim, people taking part in a procession without the consciousness of doing something extraordinary.

We asked if they had this ceremony every Sunday, but were told it was only on some special feast days. This was the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord.

In the afternoon the Turkheimers devoted themselves to enjoyment. Crowds of people walked up and down under the shadow of the trees on the broad sandy space between the

city walls and the river in front of our hotel. A ring had been set apart for dancing, and here, with great gravity, girls and young men waltzed and polked together. A band was stationed beside it, and at the end of each dance the men solemnly led their partners for a promenade round and round the circle.

They were all very modest, quiet-looking girls, very simply dressed in cotton or stuff gowns, with no bonnets, but were generally bare-headed and carried parasols, or else wore straw hats. They seemed to enjoy themselves, and the mothers and fathers and little children crowded round the ring to look on. My husband declared himself perfectly satisfied as to the conduct of the young man in the song who never came back again. Judging by these Alsatian maidens, the man would have been eccentric if he had. They were "homely," to say the least of them.

The dancing was not perhaps artistically beautiful, but it was free from vulgarity, and certainly seemed a very healthy exercise.

Turkheim is very prettily situated at the entrance of the Münster valley. The hills form almost a semicircle around it, and on the open side the river flows on into the plain, and the

tall cypresses we had seen the night before form no unimportant feature in the landscape.

Looking up the river from the bridge leading to the station we could see the quaint old walls and towers upon our right, and farther on the modern villas and manufactories by the river-side, and the mixture of the new and old here was far from unpleasing. I made a hasty sketch of the view, with one of the many "Hoheneck" mountains behind it, and only wished I could have reproduced the deep blue shadows that lay upon the mountain-sides, their indigo forests, the bright green of the trees around the town, the deep red and brown and yellow of the old walls, and the sparkle of the bright little river.

On the hills round Turkheim are several sanitariums much frequented by the people on the plain, but we had not time to visit any of them, for we were to sleep in Strasburg that night; so our tour in the Vosges was drawing to a close, and with heavy hearts we bade a final farewell to the old city, and in the afternoon went by train to Strasburg.

It was pleasant to be in Strasburg again. The old city has always had a great fascination for us, it being the first old German town we had

ever visited, and its wonderful cathedral and many-gabled houses and winding streets had charmed our English eyes. We had not seen it for years, and were rather disposed to congratulate each other on its being just the same as it used to be, though I cannot see why it should be otherwise, but this is a foolishness I have observed in other travellers besides ourselves.

So much has been written about Strasburg there seems nothing left to write. We occupied all the time we could snatch away from the cathedral the next day in trying to hunt out works on Alsace. We really did expect to find some record of the numerous castles we had seen, some account of their barons and their dependants, some history of the warlike little villages and fortified towns; but we could get nothing reliable beyond what I have related of the places we visited. The barons and their deeds seem utterly forgotten; scarcely a legend in the whole country clings round the ruins that stand on nearly every hill; they and their deeds have perished completely.

I suppose the frequent changes of mastership and the muddle of languages must have had something to do with this absence of ancestral

tales. Such disastrous wars have swept over the country that the population must have had enough to do to live, let alone indulge in story-telling. I have no doubt much might be done by a longer residence among the people, but wherever we questioned them we never got any information at all, and they appeared to feel absolutely no interest in the subject themselves.

We passed some time hunting out book and photograph shops, but with very little result. Scarcely any of the places we had visited had been photographed, except Gérardmer, and the Hohen-Königsburg, and that, alas! we had not seen.

It was in Strasburg, and only there, that we saw the curious head-dress, made of a bow of broad black ribbon, worn by the women. We had seen no national costumes anywhere. The women had mostly worn short full skirts, with round jackets coming to their waists, and wide aprons. Many of them were bareheaded, the elder ones wore caps, and in some of the French villages the married women had done so also, but there was no distinctive head-dress anywhere that we went.

Taken altogether, Alsace, or rather the Vosges, is a district eminently suited for walk-

ing tours. The distances between good quiet country inns are nowhere very great, the roads are almost invariably excellent, the scenery beautiful. It cannot boast of startling natural effects; there are no snow mountains or dangerous passes, but forest scenery in perfection, and ranges of wooded hills, and bare mountain tops. It is fertile, rich, pleasant, and peaceful, and it is with many misgivings I contribute this little work to the public, for if perchance it should induce some of my fellow-countrymen to visit it, where will the peace and lovely quiet of the hills and valleys be? Still, we derived so much enjoyment from our tour, I cannot help saying to others that if they want a few weeks' rest in delicious air among beautiful scenery, and cannot afford to pay very highly for those blessings, they are not likely to do better than go to the Vosges. I have described exactly how we lived for three weeks; and the whole cost of our trip, including tickets to and from England, and a night in Luxemburg and another in Tournay on our way back, was £25. Of course we nowhere ordered expensive wines,—we drank the wine of the country, or what they gave us as such,—but we had the best rooms in the best inns everywhere, except in Strasburg and Metz, where we

did not go to the grand hotels but to quiet moderate inns. We had carriages several times, quite enough for a walking tour, and I do not very well see where we could have spent more money if we had it.

APPENDIX.

EXPENSES OF THE TOUR.

1882.		£	s.	d.
July 22.	Train to Dover from London .	0	9	2
	Return tickets, Dover to Strasburg	7	11	0
		Frs.	Cts.	
	Lunch at Calais	1	60	
	Cab at Brussels	1	50	
	Fruit at Namur	0	60	
23.	Bill at Jemelle (Hôtel Luxemburg) .	7	15	
	Lunch at Luxemburg . . .	5	20	
24.	Hotel Bill—Metz (Hôtel de la Poste)	Mks. 10	Pfs. 30	
	Dinner at Zabern	5	60	
	Train to Wasselnheim . . .	1	30	
25.	Hotel Bill—Wasselnheim (Pomme d'Or)	7	20	
	Carriage to Wangenburg . . .	8	0	
	Dinner at Wangenburg . . .	4	50	
26.	Bill at Nideck (Kaiserliches Forsthaus)	5	0	
27.	Hotel Bill — Nieder-Haslach (Pomme d'Or)	8	50	
	Train from Urmatt to Rosheim .	1	20	
	Hotel Bill at Rosheim (Pflug) . .	11	50	

1882.			Mks.	Pfs.
July	27.	Carriage to Girbaden and Odilienberg	18	0
		Wine at Laubenhain	0	40
	29.	Hotel Bill (Odilienberg Convent)	15	0
		Dinner at Barr (Rothes Haus)	5	0
		Train from Barr to Rappoltsweiler	4	20
		Beer at Schlettstadt	0	10
	30.	Hotel Bill—Rappoltsweiler (Lamm)	15	20
		Train to Ostheim	1	30
	31.	Dinner—Kaysersberg (Krone)	4	80
		Post Cart to Orbey	3	0
Aug.	1.	Hotel Bill—Lac Blanc (Hôtel du Lac)	10	90
	2.	Hotel Bill — Schlucht (Châlet Hartmann)	21	70
		Share of Carriage to Gérardmer	3	0
	3.	Hotel Bill—Gérardmer (Hôtel de la Poste)	14	60
		Dinner—La Bresse (Soleil)	6	0
		Carriage, Gérardmer to La Bresse	12	0
		Post Cart, Wildenstein to Wesserling	2	50
	4.	Hotel Bill—Wesserling (Hôtel de Wesserling)	7	20
		Train to Weiler	0	90
		Lunch at Goldbach	1	40
		Milk at Châlet	0	50
	5.	Hotel Bill—Rolle (Die Rolle)	20	40
		Post Cart, Lautenbach to Gebweiler	1	20
		Wine and cakes at Gebweiler	0	55
		Train to Colmar	3	60
		Coffee at Colmar	1	80
		Train to Turkheim	0	70

1882.			Mks.	Pfs.
Aug.	6.	Hotel Bill—Turkheim (Hôtel Petit Demange)	10	0
		Train, Turkheim to Strasburg . .	8	0
	7.	Fruit	0	74
		Cakes	0	62
		Hotel Bill—Strasburg (Hôtel de Vienne)	15	75
			Frs.	Cts.
	8.	Hotel Bill—Luxemburg (Hôtel de la Gare)	8	15
		Dinner—Arlon	5	50
		Cakes	0	40
		Train	0	80
		Dinner—Brussels	3	20
	9.	Hotel Bill—Tournay	7	0
		Lunch—Calais	4	30
		Luggage	0	15
			£	s. d.
		Various Extras . . . about	1	10 6
		Total, about	£25	0 0

ITINERARY.

1882.

July 22—Saturday. Left Dover 9.35; arrived at Calais 11.30 — steamer. Left Calais 12.0; arrived at Brussels (*via* Lille, Tournai, etc.) 5.0—train. Left Brussels 5.56; arrived at Jemelle (*via* Namur) 8.16 (or rather 9)—train.

July 23—Sunday. Left Jemelle 9.50; arrived at Luxemburg 1.0—train. Left Luxemburg 2.40; arrived at Metz (*via* Thionville) 4.23—train.

July 24—Monday. Left Metz 7.15; arrived at Zabern (*via* Saarburg) 10.35—train. Visited the town of Zabern and the Hoh-Barr. Left Zabern 4.18; arrived at Wasselnheim 4.57—train.

July 25—Tuesday. Left Wasselnheim about 9 by carriage, and drove through Romansweiler to Wangenburg, arriving at about 12. Left Wangenburg about 2 and walked to top of Schneeberg (3159 feet) in about two hours; thence descended to Nideck in about an hour.

July 26—Wednesday. Left Nideck at 11.15, and walked to Nieder-Haslach, arriving at about 2.

July 27—Thursday. Left Nieder-Haslach about 8.45, and walked to Urmatt. Left Urmatt by train at 9.25; arrived at Rosheim at 10.18.

July 28—Friday. Left Rosheim by carriage at 8.30, and drove to Girbaden, arriving at about 12, including a walk of about half an hour to Castle. Descended to Laubenhain on foot (about half an hour), and drove through Klingenthal to the Odilienberg.

July 29—Saturday. Left the Odilienberg at 8, and walked to Barr, *via* Landsperg. Left Barr by train at 2.6; arrived at Rappoltsweiler (*via* Schlettstadt) at 3.51.

1882.

July 30—Sunday. Morning at Rappoltsweiler. Left by tram and train at 3.6; arrived at Ostheim at 3.38. Thence by carriage to Bebelnheim in about twenty minutes.

July 31—Monday. Left Bebelnheim on foot at about 11.30, and walked through Mittelweier, Bennweier, Sigolsheim, and Kienzheim, to Kaysersberg, arriving at about 1. Left Kaysersberg by post omnibus at 1.40, and drove through Hachimette and Schnierlach to Orbey, arriving a little before 4. Left Orbey immediately on foot, and walked to the Hôtel du Lac at the Lac Blanc, arriving at about 6.

August 1—Tuesday. Left the Hôtel du Lac at about 9, and walked along the Hautes Chaumes, past the Lac Noir and Lac Vert to the Schlucht, arriving at a little after noon.

August 2—Wednesday. Morning at the Schlucht in a fog. Left Schlucht by carriage at about 2, and drove, *via* the Retournemer, Roche du Diable, and Longemer, to Gérardmer, arriving at about 5. Walked round the lake of Gérardmer in about an hour.

August 3—Thursday. Left Gérardmer at about 10.30 by carriage, arriving at La Bresse at 12. Left La Bresse at 2 on foot and walked along the valley of the Volonge and over the Col de Bramont, arriving at Wildenstein at 5.30. Left Wildenstein at 6 by post omnibus, arriving at Wesserling at 7.15.

August 4—Friday. Left Wesserling by train at 8.51; arrived at Weiler at 9.11. Left Weiler at once on foot, and walked along the valleys of the Rennbach and Niettelbach to Goldbach, arriving at 10.45. Left Goldbach at 11.30, and walked by an erroneous and circuitous route to the top of the Gebweiler Belchen,

1882.

arriving at about 4. Left the summit at 5, and walked to the Belchensee by a "bee-line," and thence through the forest to the Rolle, arriving at about 8.

August 5—Saturday. Morning at the Rolle. Left the Rolle on foot at about 1.30, and walked along the Lauchthal to Lautenbach, arriving at 3.25. Left immediately by post omnibus, and arrived at Gebweiler at 4.15. Left Gebweiler at 5.35 by train, and arrived at Colmar (*via* Bollweiler) at 6.46. Left Colmar at 7.45 by train, and arrived at Turkheim at 8.6.

August 6—Sunday. Morning at Turkheim. Left Turkheim at 1.43 by train; arrived at Strasburg at 4.27.

August 7—Monday. Morning at Strasburg. Left Strasburg at 11.30; arrived at Luxemburg at 6.11.

August 8—Tuesday. Left Luxemburg at 9.15; arrived at Brussels at 3.25. Left Brussels at 8.15; arrived at Tournay at 9.50.

August 9—Wednesday. Left Tournay at 12.9; arrived at Calais at 3.20. Left Calais at 3.30; arrived at Dover at 5.

THE END.

Printed by R. & R. CLARK, *Edinburgh.*

00083600

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC

WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018